



BATMAN™

Ego
and
other
tails

Darwyn

the deluxe edition

DARWYN COOKE

WITH paul grist • bill wray • tim sale • jeph loeb • j. bone • amanda conner • jimmy palmiotti

INTRODUCTION BY AMANDA CONNER

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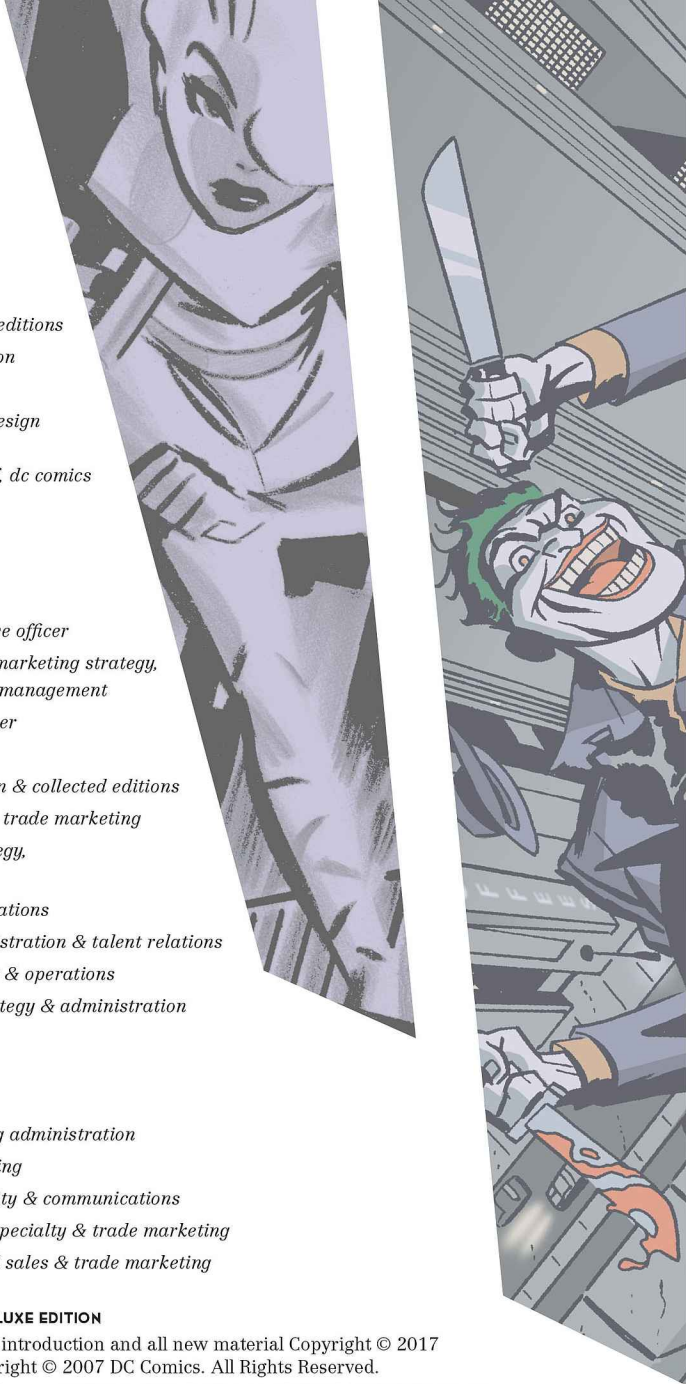
BATMAN: EGO AND OTHER TAILS - THE DELUXE EDITION

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the deluxe edition

BATMAN™

Ego and other tails

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by special arrangement with
the jerry siegel family*





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introduction

by Amanda Conner

Darwyn Cooke is the closest thing I've ever had to a big brother. And I mean that in all the ways you can have a big brother. Sometimes I looked up to and admired him, and sometimes he drove me crazy. This intro is about the "driving me crazy" part.

When I was trying to break into the wonderful world of comics, it was the late '80s. Many times I would show my art to people I was hoping would give me work, and many times I would hear this same thing: "It's good, but it's a little too animated-looking. Can you make it more realistic and superhero-ish? Y'know, more comic book-y?"

And so I would go back to the drawing board (literally) and try to bend my style into a more late '80s/early '90s standard comic book style. It worked. Soon enough, I was a professional in the wonderful world of comics.

Cut to the early 2000s. Jimmy Palmiotti (my husband, but still my boyfriend at this point) and I are at a convention in Toronto. Jimmy says, "You an' me are grabbin' dinner with this guy Darwyn Cooke an' his girlfriend, Marsha." Always one to gleefully let a couple of locals show me where all the good food is, I was in!

Embarrassingly, I was unfamiliar with his art (one of the downsides of working in comics is less time to read them). So I decided to take a look. I was totally blown away, and dammit, he had such an awesome ANIMATED STYLE!

Now, I can't begin to tell you what it's like to be told that your style is too animated for comics, and then have a guy like Darwyn come along and knock the world's socks off with his animated style. I think I behaved only slightly better than Yosemite Sam when he's pitching one of his hissy fits. "OOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"





And then, for an extra-adroitly-executed kick in the pants, Dar wins, like, 850 Eisners.

But the more I looked at his art, the more I understood. His art has so much movement, so much power, so much *oomph*. Sort of like a crazy mash-up of Frank Frazetta's powerful, dynamic movement, Max Fleischer's dramatic, moody Superman shorts and Jack Kirby's supercharged energy. But the quiet moments are just as effective as the busy, bold moments, making the contrast that much more effective.

Admittedly, over the years, the wonderful world of comics has morphed into a brave new world where all sorts of different styles are becoming the norm. I'm not quite sure if Dar jumped in at the right time for his artwork to create such a sensation, or if he simply came along and told everyone, "I don't give a rat's ass whether it's too animated-looking or not...this is how it's gonna go down," then just bulldozed everyone into compliance—which would not be out of character for him.

However it happened, it worked out incredibly well, and we all got to have some amazing Darwyn Cooke magic in our lives, even if it was only for a short time.

Darwyn, in spite of driving me crazy with his being so damn exceptional all the time, was great to be around. We had the same fondness for mid-century modern architecture and furniture, liked a lot of the same old movies, and were quite keen on late '60s and early '70s muscle cars. He taught me a lot about all that stuff. And he was fun to hang out with. And he made me laugh. And I looked up to and admired him.

Y'know, the way you do with a big brother.

Amanda Conner
Safety Harbor, Florida, January 2017

Amanda Conner is an acclaimed comics writer and artist, known for her work on HARLEY QUINN, BEFORE WATCHMEN: SILK SPECTRE and POWER GIRL, among others.



BATMAN

Ego



BATMAN™

Ego

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

Darwyn Cooke

LETTERED BY

Jonathan Babcock

THIS STORY IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER,
GRANT FREDERICK COOKE

NO

ARE NOW

YOU ARE NOW
GOTHAM
DRIVE

*It's at times
like this...*

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING
GOTHAM CITY
CARE

*In the cold...
in the dark...*

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING
GOTHAM CITY
DRIVE CAREFULLY

*I feel that I'm
losing my way.*

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING
GOTHAM CITY
DRIVE CAREFULLY

That the city I've
given myself to--

--threatens
to crush me--

--with the
weight of my
commitment
to her.





The rest of the gang was routine.
The only loose end is the driver,
Buster Smith, and \$400,000 in
charity money.

Gotham is the largest city
in the country, but Buster
knows it's not big enough
to keep him safe from me.

True to form,
Buster is running--

--but he can't hide.

Last night I persuaded Buster that it was in his best interests to tell me where the Joker was.



Somehow he pulled a fast one on his boss and made off with the money--

--but I've been keeping tabs on him.



My tracking device indicates he's heading this way, and odds are he'll cross this bridge on his way out of town.



Suddenly my knees go slack and I grab some wall-- I stand there, shaking, waiting for it all to pass and I feel the nagging melancholy crowd out more pressing thoughts.



I realized long ago that I can't change the world--



--in three years I've come to realize that I can't appreciably change this city--



--I've begun to wonder if the only thing I can change is myself.

The shaking stops long enough for me to pull myself up to the top level of the bridge. The wind cuts through the thermals and I look at the bright side--

--at least my shoulder is too numb to feel.



The city's impartial gaze darts across my back.



Is it realistic, this obsession? Is it sane?



deeeet!

I drop the introspection. It's time to go to work.



I'm tired of men like Buster-- morally bankrupt and unimaginative--

--empty, meaningless men, feeding off my city-- and contributing nothing.



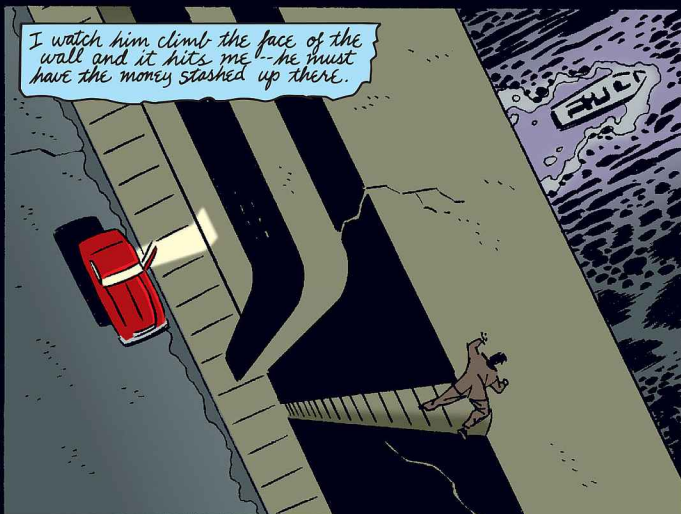
I'm about to leap down onto the hood of his car and scare the pants off him when the unexpected happens...



Why would he stop in the middle of the bridge?



He stares at the top of the parapet, and a look steals over his face that I can't put my finger on.



I watch him climb the face of the wall and it hits me--he must have the money stashed up there.



Just when I think this is going to wrap itself up nice and neat, it unravels into the irrational.

It's not the money--he's going to--



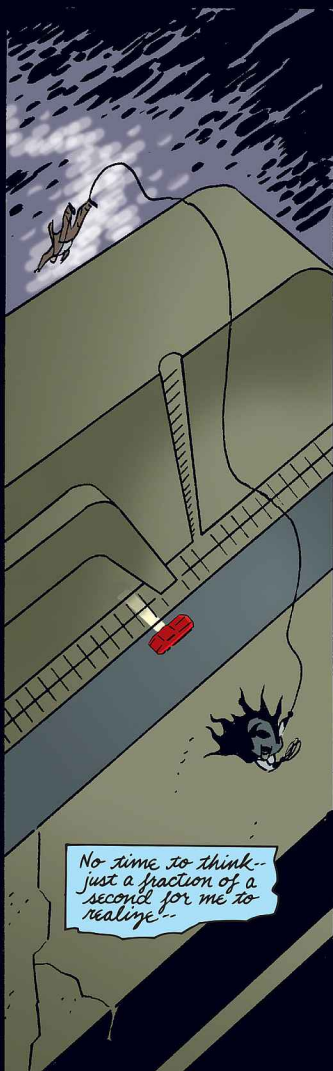
--jump.



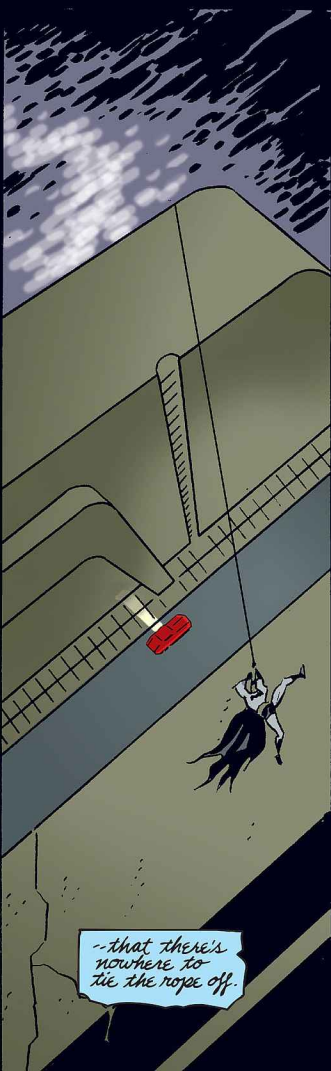
Pain gone. Exhaustion gone. There is only adrenaline--



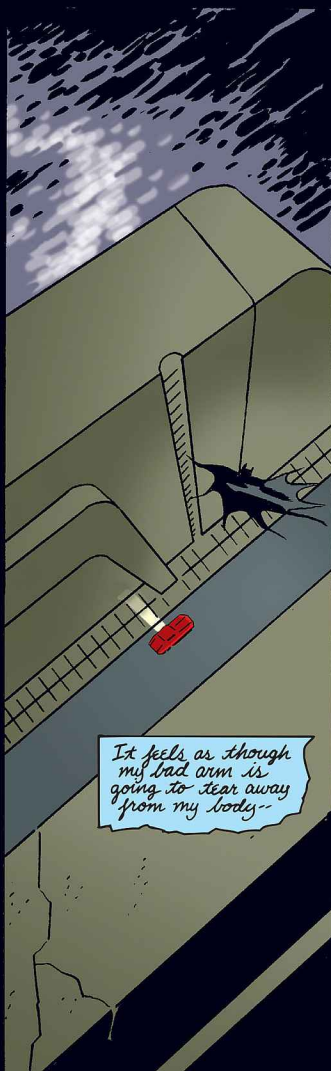
--and a target.



No time to think--
just a fraction of a
second for me to
realize--



--that there's
nowhere to
tie the rope off.

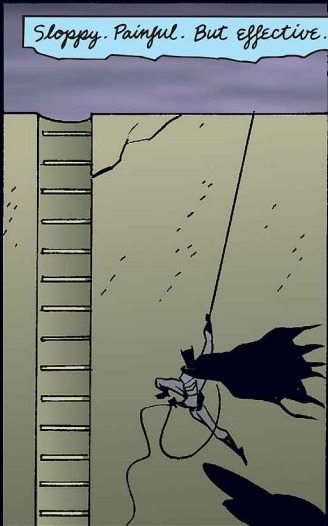


It feels as though
my bad arm is
going to tear away
from my body--



--until I compare it
to the exquisite pain
of hitting concrete at
35 miles per hour.

ARRGGHHH!



Sloppy. Painful. But effective.



Buster's gratitude warms my heart.

NO!



I consider leaving him to hang while I quietly pass out.

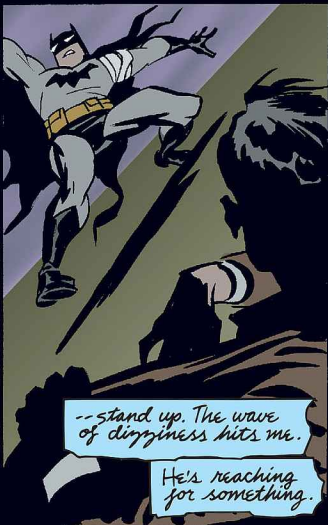


It takes everything I've got to pull him up. HE whirls at me, eyes blazing with hate.

LAST NIGHT YOU THREATEN TO DROP ME OFF A ROOFTOP AND TONIGHT YOU STOP ME--

--WHAT'S THE MATTER, FRUITCAKE, CAN'T MAKE UP YOUR MIND?

He's wild-- unpredictable. Got to pull myself together and try to--



--stand up. The wave of dizziness hits me.

He's reaching for something.

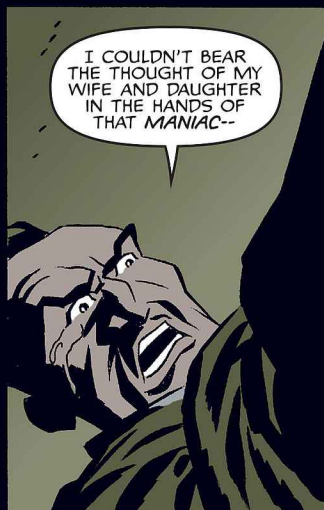


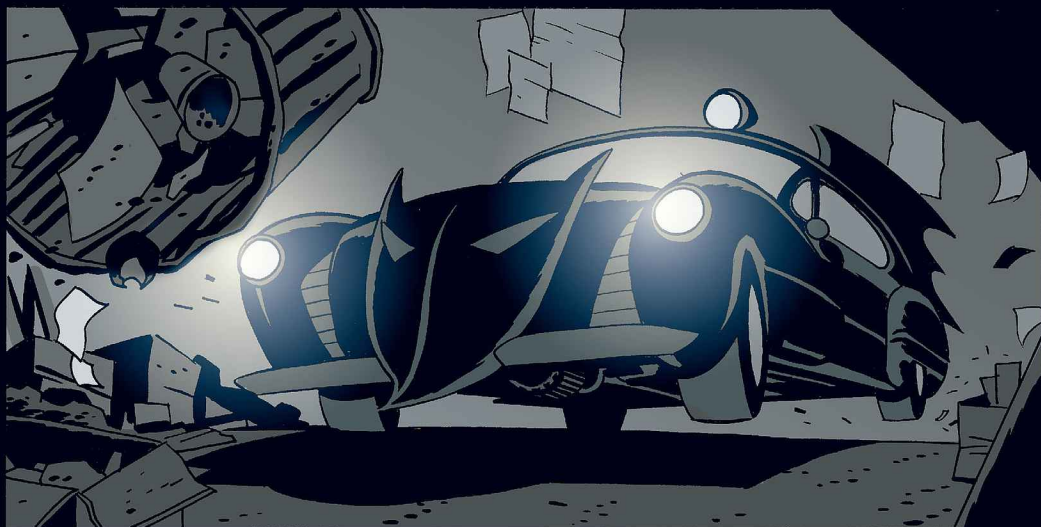
Vision blurs--



--and then clears.

DON'T MOVE, YOU FREAK!









MOTHER...
FATHER.


I HAVE
SOMETHING TO
TELL YOU.

I tell them of a man
named Buster Snibbs.
A man who had a
wife and child.

By the time I am done,
my body is racked
with an uncontrollable
sobbing.

They remain frozen
through it all, as
if they were hanging
on my every word.

--urging me to discover
the center of this grief--
to heal it from the
inside out.



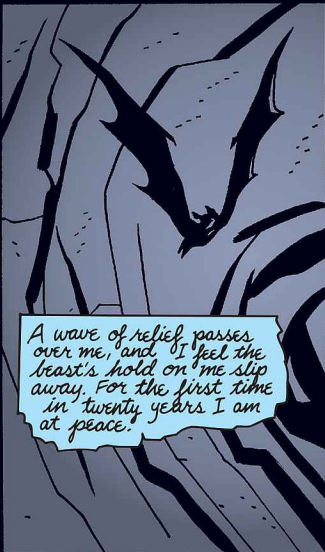
In the past, whenever I had lost hope, and the darkness closed in on me, the power of the cave and the undying spirit of my parents would feed me up and fuel me with the strength to carry on.

But as dawn's brittle fingers steal across the frozen ground to herald a new morning, I find that this time it's not enough.



I CAN'T DO IT.

NOT ANYMORE.



A wave of relief passes over me, and I feel the beast's hold on me slip away. For the first time in twenty years I am at peace.



The feeling lasts for exactly twenty seconds.



YOU FOOL!



YOU THINK
YOU KNOW PAIN,
YOU COWARD?

I WILL
SHOW YOU
PAIN.

*I am not sure how--
not sure why--but as my
heart floods with terror,
I am sure of one thing:*

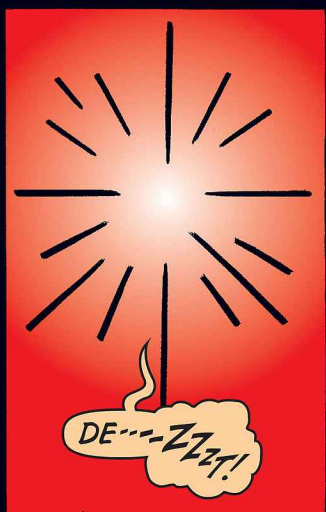
I am facing myself.

EGO

A PSYCHOTIC SLIDE INTO THE HEART OF DARKNESS





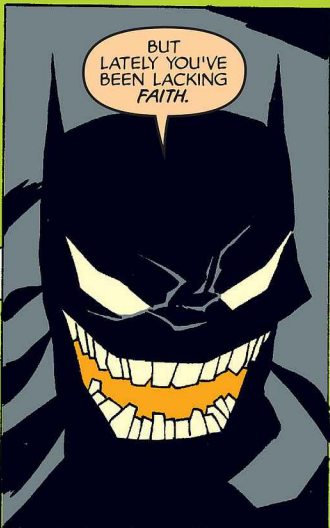




MY GOD.



PERHAPS...



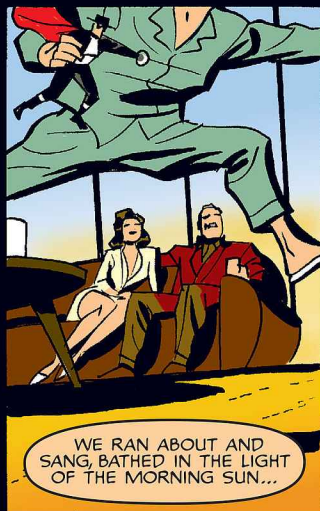
BUT
LATELY YOU'VE
BEEN LACKING
FAITH.

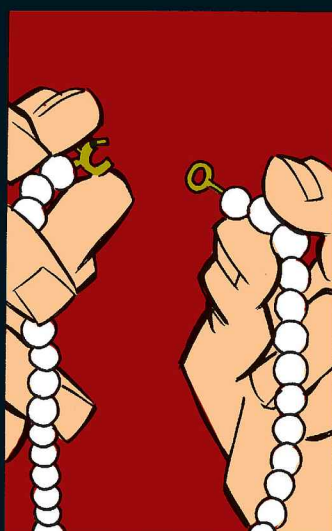
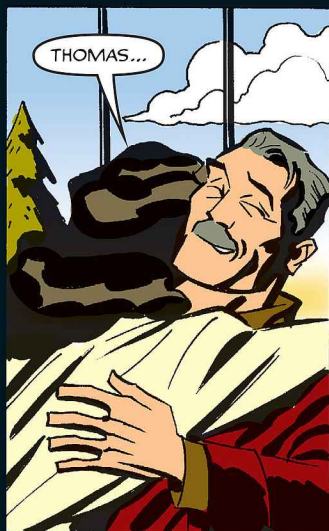


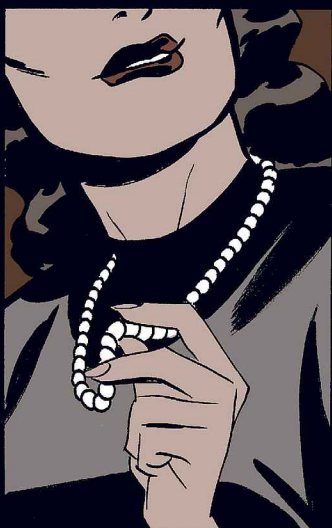
I REMEMBER
THAT CHRISTMAS,
BRUCE. IT WAS
THE DAY WE FIRST
MET.

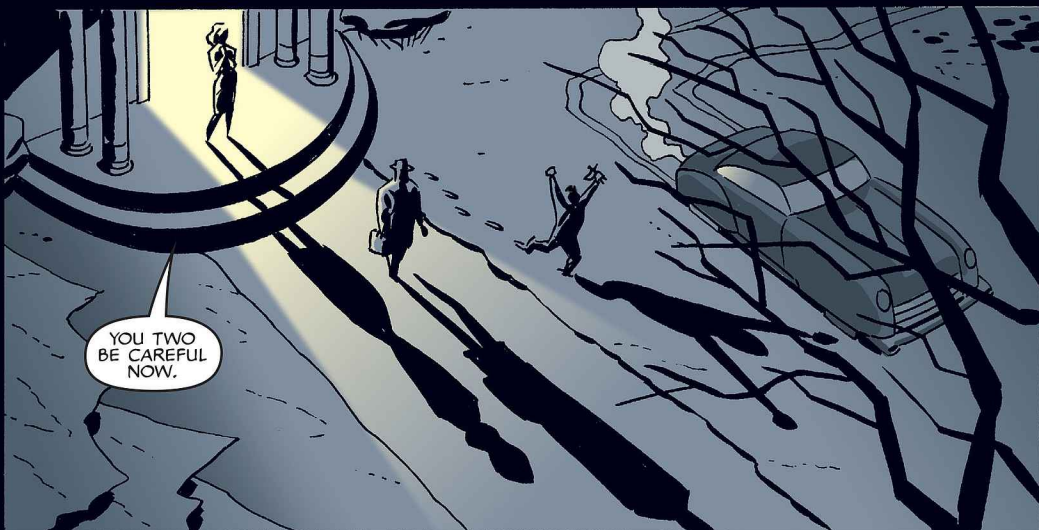
ZORRO!
THIS IS THE
BEST GIFT!

IT'S
EXACTLY WHAT
I WANTED!



















IT WAS A SHORT TIME
LATER THAT EVERYTHING CHANGED.
AND IN ONE HORRIFYING INSTANT,
I **EXPLODED** WITHIN YOUR YOUNG
HEART.





FROM THAT MOMENT ON,
WE WERE CONSTANT COMPANIONS.

I WATCHED AS YOU
STRUGGLED TO CARRY ON--
TO FIND A REASON
FOR WHAT HAD HAPPENED.
WHEN NO REASON COULD
BE FOUND I DROVE YOU
TO CREATE A REASON,
TO DISCOVER A PURPOSE
IN A WORLD GONE MAD.

ALL YOUR TRAVELS,
ALL YOUR TRAINING--
THE THIRST FOR
KNOWLEDGE AND
ADVENTURE-- I WAS
THERE, SILENTLY URGING
YOU FORWARD.



EVEN WHEN YOU
THOUGHT YOU WERE
READY, YOU STILL HAD
TO COME TO TERMS
WITH ME.



I WAS
THERE, I WAS
INESCAPABLE.



BUT YOU
STILL COULD
NOT SPEAK
MY NAME.



FINALLY, IN
AN EXPLOSION OF
GLASS WE CAME
TOGETHER.



NEITHER
OF US HAD A
CHOICE.



YOU
PREFER TO
CALL ME
BATMAN.



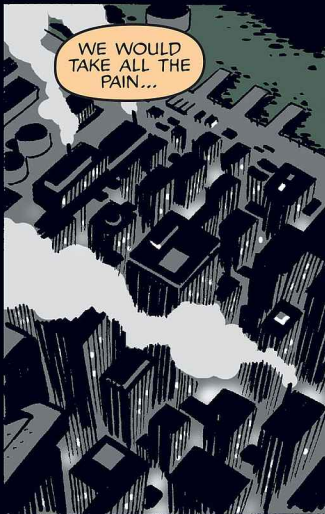
BUT THE
REASON YOU
CAN NEVER
ESCAPE ME...



...IS THAT
MY NAME IS
FEAR.



AND I
LIVE WITHIN
YOU.





WE WERE *MAGNIFICENT* THEN.
WE DESCENDED ON THIS CITY LIKE AN
UNHOLY INSTRUMENT OF VENGEANCE.
RELENTLESS AS A SHARK.

*BLACKER
THAN THEIR
DARK
HEARTS.*

FOR A SHORT TIME
IT WAS PERFECT.



WORD QUICKLY
SPREAD ACROSS
THE UNDERWORLD.

CRIMINALS WERE
TERRIFIED OF THE
BAT, AND THE CITY
WAS A SAFER
PLACE TO LIVE.





WE WERE A
FORCE OF NATURE
THAT ACTED ABOVE
THE LAW. HOWEVER,
IT WASN'T LONG BE-
FORE YOUR *VANITY*
AND *NEED FOR*
APPROVAL--



--YIELDED TO
THE CALL OF
CELEBRITY.



I HAVE ENDURED
THIS, AS WELL AS
YOUR SOMEWHAT
PITIFUL NEED FOR
COMPANIONSHIP.



THE WAR
NECESSITATES ALLIES.
I ACCEPT GORDON
AND THE BAT SIGNAL
BECAUSE IT FURTHERS
OUR CAUSE.



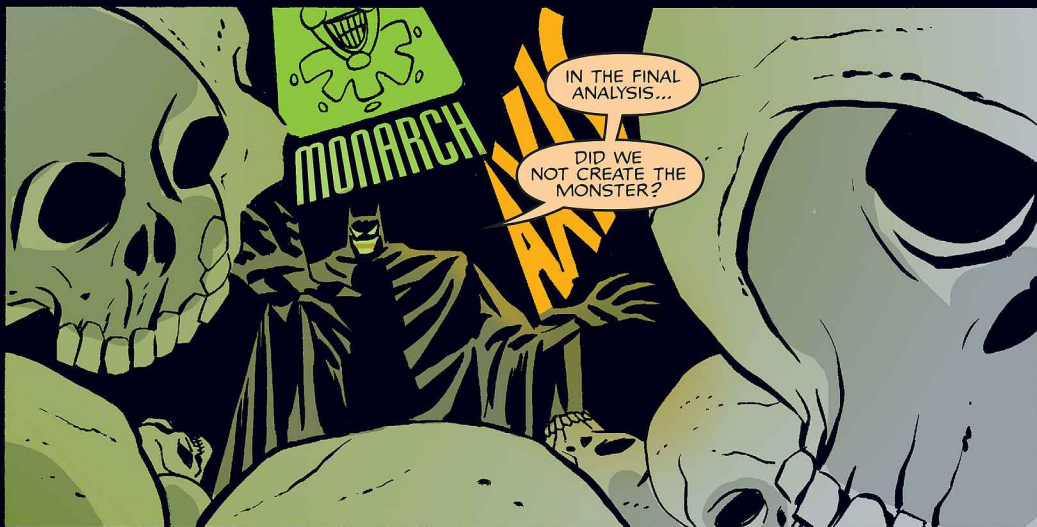
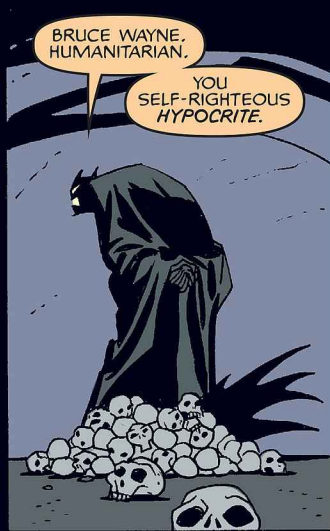
AMUSING... YOU
ASSUME I WAS TALKING
ABOUT GORDON.

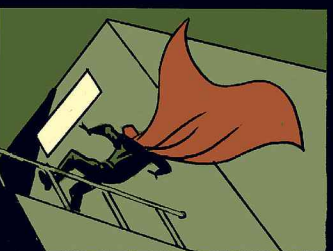












PREOCCUPIED WITH
THE REST OF THE GANG,
WE LEFT THE RED HOOD
TO HIS FATE.



AND IN SO DOING,
WE SET LOOSE UPON
THE NIGHT SOMETHING
FAR MORE SAVAGE.



AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!



EVERY TIME WE CATCH HIM AND ALLOW HIM TO LIVE, HE BREAKS FREE TO KILL AGAIN. ALL OF THIS HORROR AND TRAGEDY IN THE SERVICE OF YOUR 'CODE OF HONOR'!

OR COULD IT BE THAT THE GREAT BATMAN NEEDS HIS ARCHNEMESIS IN ORDER TO FEEL COMPLETE?

EITHER WAY, WE CANNOT WALK AWAY FROM THIS. ONE DAY, WE'LL HAVE TO KILL THAT MURDERING SCUM...



DON'T YOU
HAVE ANYTHING
TO SAY FOR
YOURSELF?



EVERYBODY
LIVES IN HARM'S
WAY.

TRAGEDY STRIKES INDISCRIMINATELY. THE DIFFERENCE IS HOW YOU DEAL WITH IT. FACED WITH HAVING TO ACCEPT THAT HE HAD DESTROYED HIS CHANCES FOR A NORMAL LIFE, THE JOKER CHOSE MADNESS INSTEAD.



FRANKLY...
Heh...



THIS IS...
HAHA... CRAZY...
HA HA HA



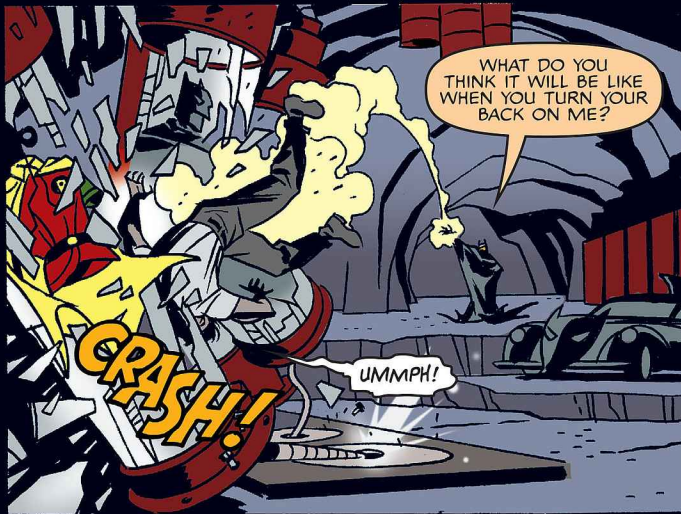
I'M
TALKING =HA HA HA=
TALKING TO... BATMAN...
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA

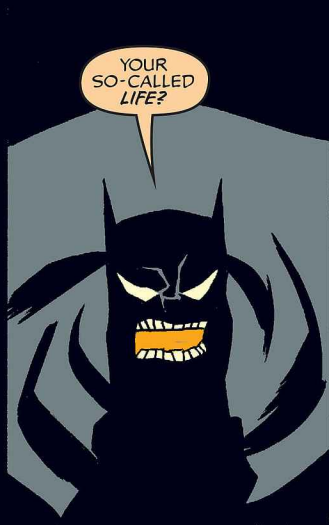


TELL ME, BATMAN,
IS IT TRUE YOU'RE JUST AN
UNDERDONE POTATO?



HAHAHAHAHA!!











TWO-FACE.
HARVEY'S OBSESSION WITH
THE NUMBER TWO MADE
IT EASY TO ANTICIPATE HIS
CRIMES.

HIS DEPENDENCE ON
THE FLIP OF A COIN TO MAKE A
DECISION MADE HIM A WILDLY
UNPREDICTABLE OPPONENT...

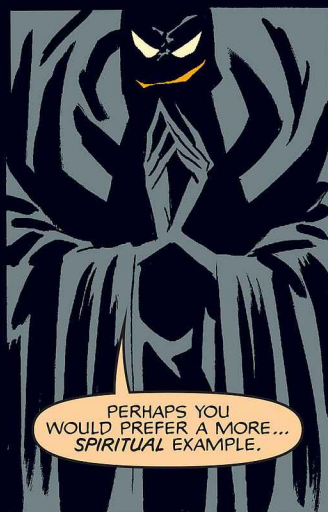




HARVEY WAS IN A POSITION WHERE HIS SECRET SELF COULD ACT FREELY. HARVEY'S CONDITION ENSURED HE COULDN'T BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANYTHING TWO-FACE DID.



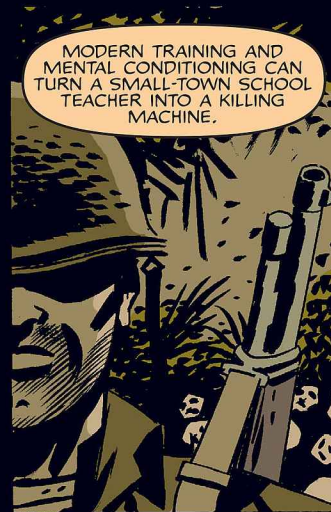
HIS CONDITION? HE'S MENTALLY ILL!



PERHAPS YOU WOULD PREFER A MORE... SPIRITUAL EXAMPLE.



ANCIENT CULTURES SPEAK OF SIMPLE TRIBESMEN INHABITED BY THE SPIRIT OF GREAT WARRIORS.



MODERN TRAINING AND MENTAL CONDITIONING CAN TURN A SMALL-TOWN SCHOOL TEACHER INTO A KILLING MACHINE.



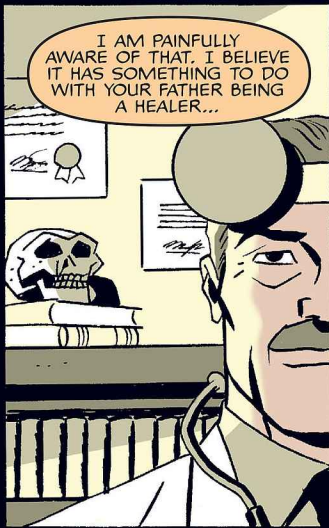
EVEN YOUR BELOVED DON DIEGO UNDERSTOOD THE MOST BASIC PRINCIPLE OF ANYTHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR.



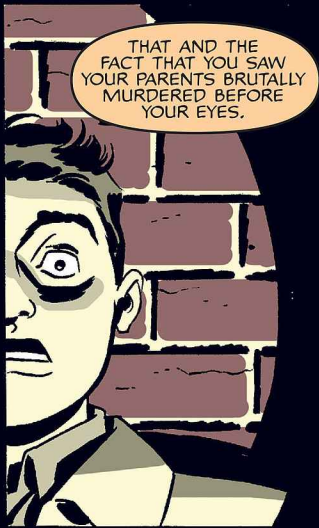
IN WAR THERE ARE CASUALTIES.



BUT I'M NOT A KILLER!



I AM PAINFULLY AWARE OF THAT. I BELIEVE IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR FATHER BEING A HEALER...



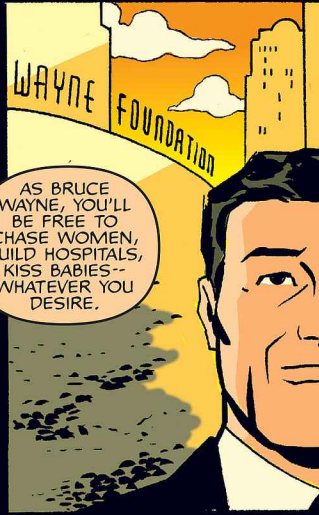
THAT AND THE FACT THAT YOU SAW YOUR PARENTS BRUTALLY MURDERED BEFORE YOUR EYES.



THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH WE SHARE A HOST BODY, I SUGGEST WE ADMIT THAT WE ARE SEPARATE ENTITIES-- YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS--



--ANY MORE THAN I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR YOURS.



AS BRUCE WAYNE, YOU'LL BE FREE TO CHASE WOMEN, BUILD HOSPITALS, KISS BABIES-- WHATEVER YOU DESIRE.



BUT WHEN THE BATMAN IS NEEDED YOU WILL STEP ASIDE...



...AND LEAVE ME FREE...



...TO DEAL WITH THE DEVIL IN KIND.



YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT WHAT? SELF-INDUCED PSYCHOSIS? VOLUNTARILY SPLITTING OUR PERSONALITIES?

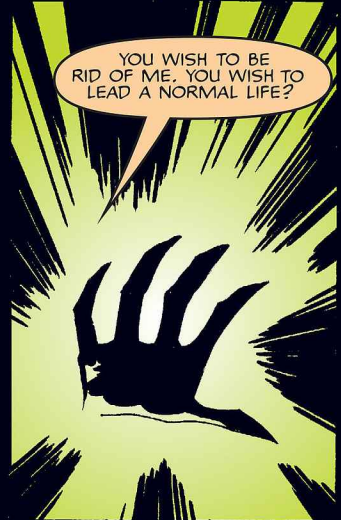




THEN YOU
LEAVE US NO
CHOICE.



YOU CANNOT
DISMISS ME
AND YOU WILL
NOT YIELD TO
MY WILL.



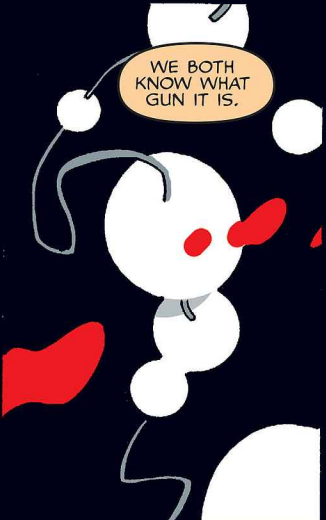
YOU WISH TO BE
RID OF ME. YOU WISH TO
LEAD A NORMAL LIFE?



THEN KILL ME.



THIS GUN...



WE BOTH
KNOW WHAT
GUN IT IS.



USE IT.







IS *THIS* WHAT I HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO?



YES.



IT IS OUR DESTINY.



WE LOST OUR NORMAL LIFE A LONG TIME AGO.



WE CANNOT CHANGE THE PAST. ALL WE CAN DO IS PROTECT OTHERS AND ALLOW THEM THE CHANCE FOR THE HAPPINESS THAT *WE'LL NEVER HAVE.*



YOU *HAVE* TO ACCEPT THAT.



THE TRUTH HURTS.



BUT A VERY WISE MAN ONCE SAID THAT THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE.



YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THERE IS A LINE WE MAY NEVER CROSS.



NO KILLING.

IT IS THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM.



AS MUCH AS BATMAN IS A TERRIFYING SYMBOL TO THE UNDERWORLD, HE IS ALSO A SYMBOL TO THE GOOD PEOPLE OF THIS CITY.



A SYMBOL OF HOPE.



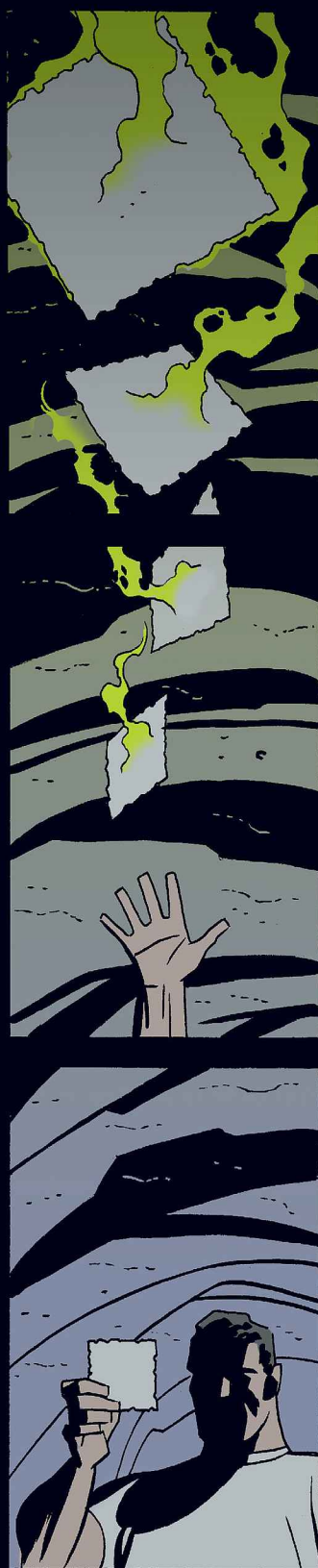
IF YOU CAN LIVE WITH THAT...



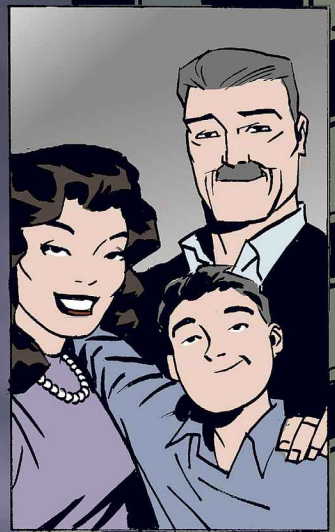
THEN BRUCE WAYNE CAN LIVE WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY.



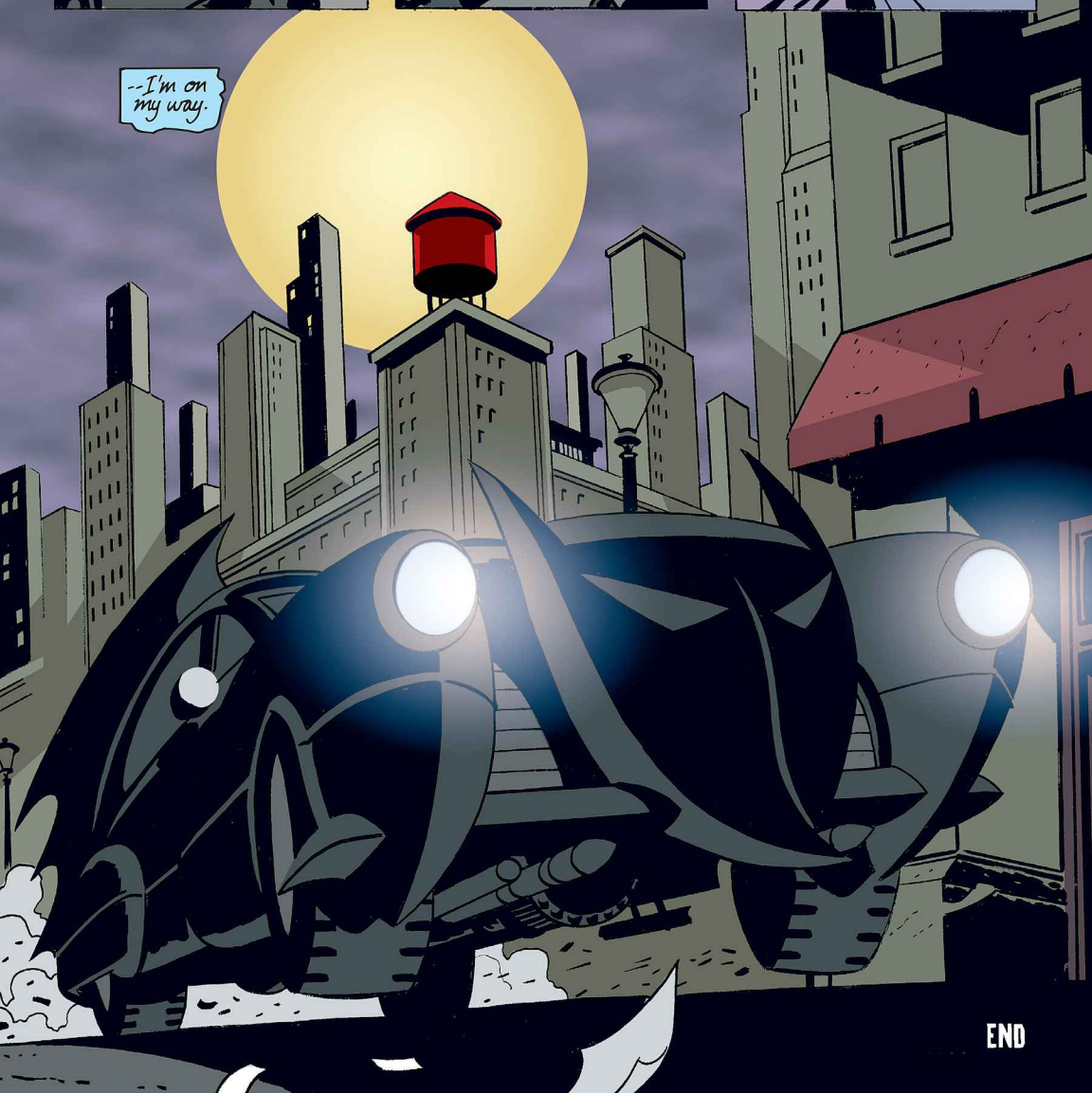
AGREED.







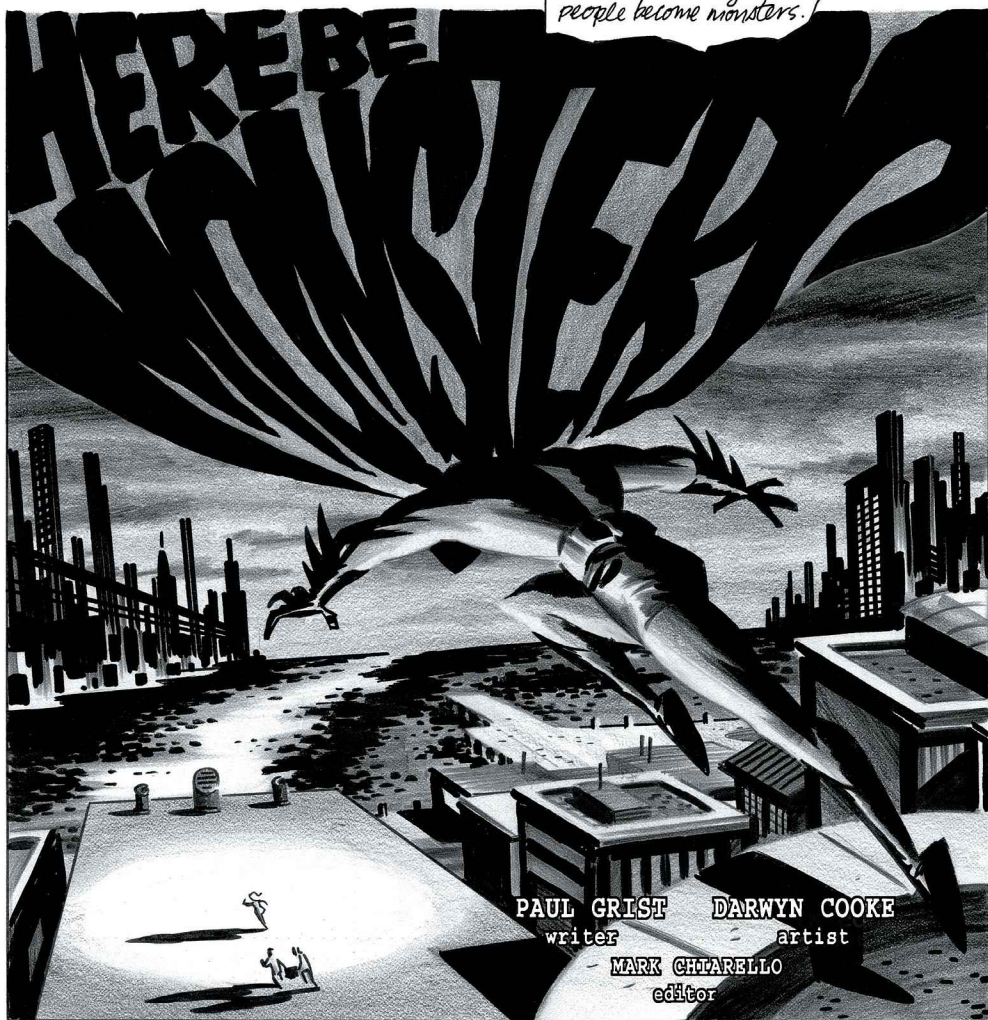
--I'm on
my way.



END



I've seen too many people become monsters.



PAUL GRIST DARWYN COOKE
writer artist
- MARK CHITARELLO
editor



Her name is
MADAME X

She's threatening
to poison the
entire city.



I don't know why



These people
are crazy.



It's just what
they do.



The police won't get
here in time. She's got
them running all
over Gotham.

IT'S
OVER.



Looks like it's
up to me.

BATMAN!
I THOUGHT YOU'D
NEVER
GET HERE!



That's what I do.

TAKE CARE
OF HIM!

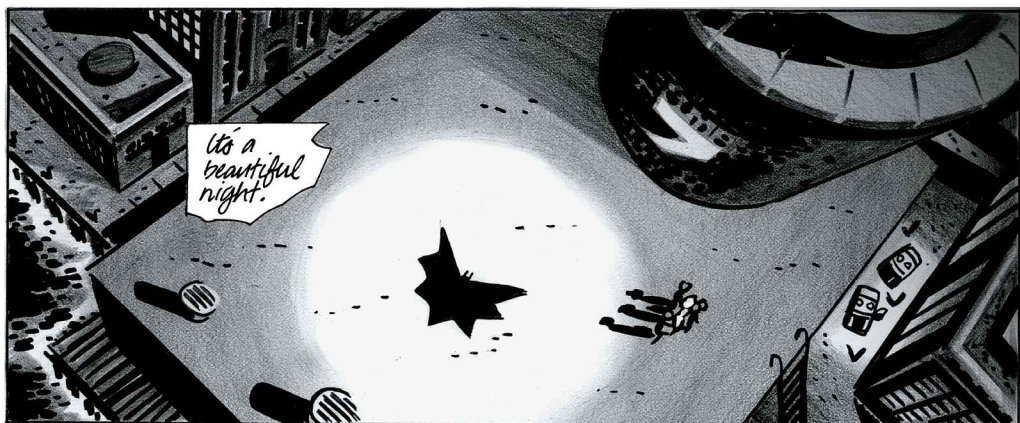
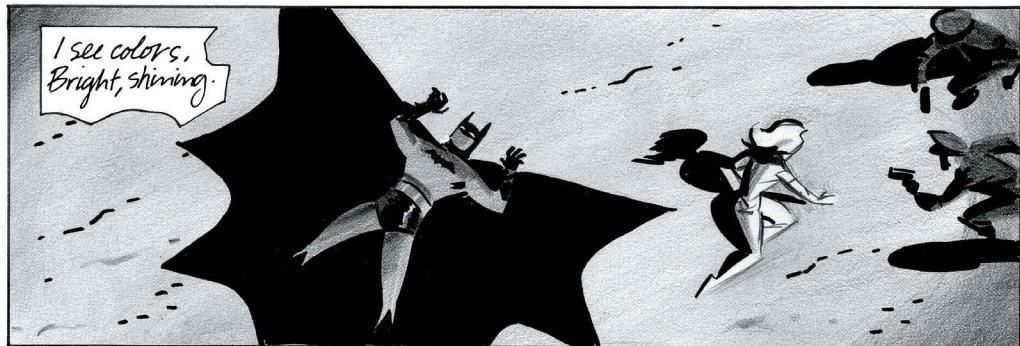










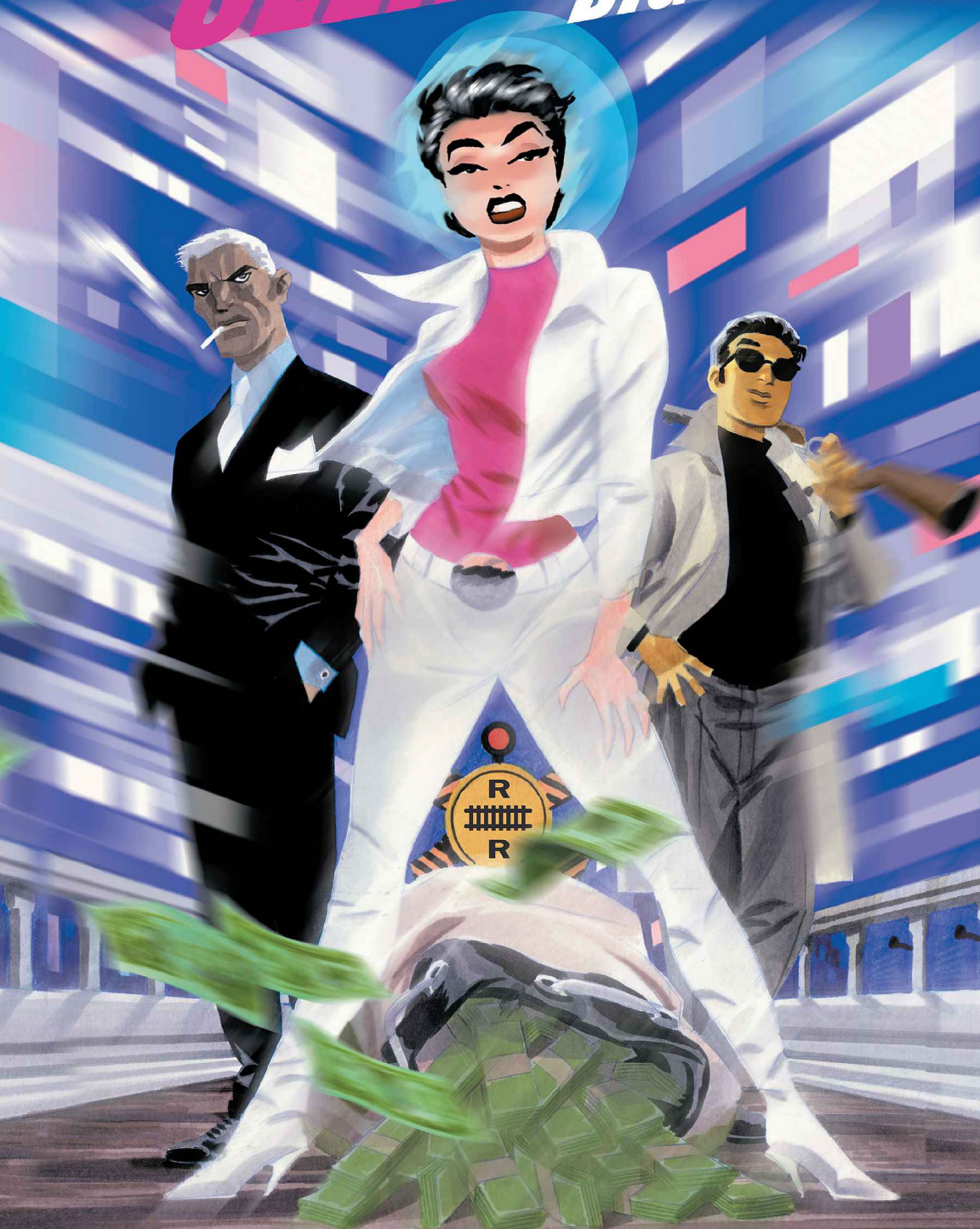


the end





CATWOMAN
SELINA'S
BIG SCORE





selina's
BIG
score

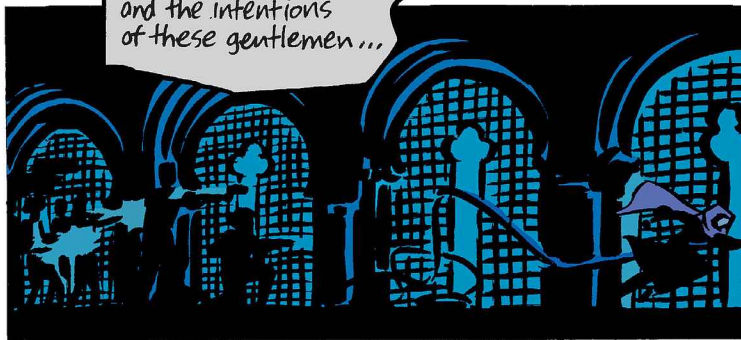
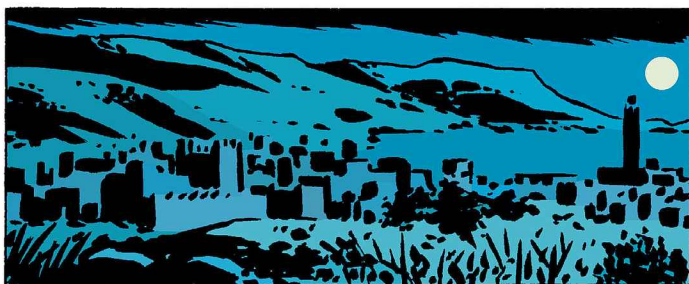
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

Darwyn Cooke

COLORS BY

Matt Hollingsworth

FOR CANDIS



So despite the rumors and the intentions of these gentlemen...



I'm very
much alive.

BOOK ONE

SELINA



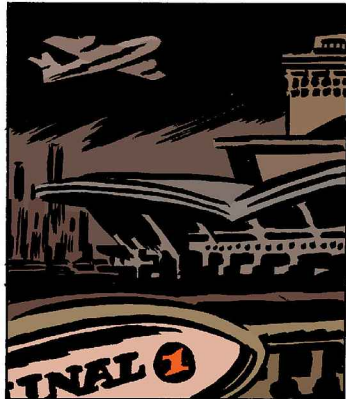




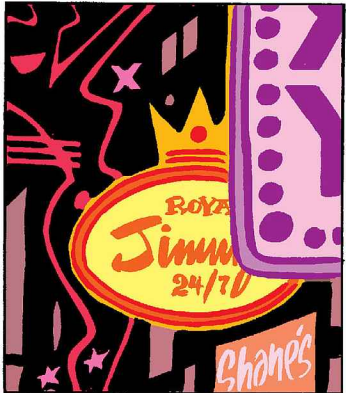
The great thing about this place is the classics still work. If I pulled this on Batman I'd be in Blackgate in a half hour.

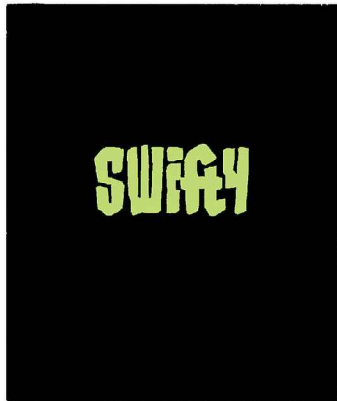
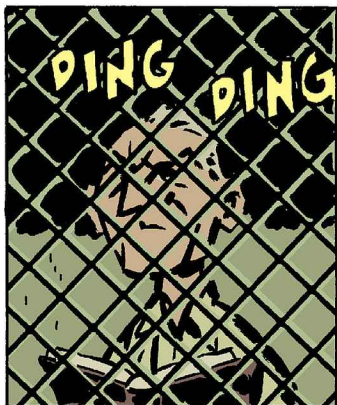
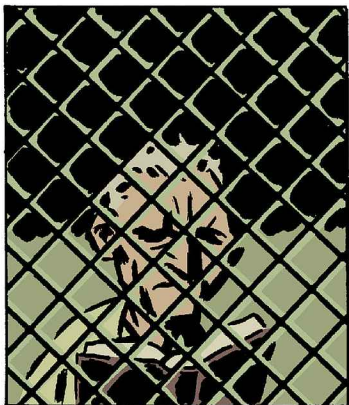
I give it a few minutes to be sure it's safe.





GOTHAM CITY









The box I picked up from Swifty went a long way towards cooling me out.

It contained about 10 grand in 'walking around' money and the keys to a safe house ...

I kill some time with a decent meal, then pick up some clothes and toiletries. After dark I scope my 'safe house'-- an abandoned tenement:



Looks deserted.

CREEEE



Finally, after all the running, a place to rest.



A place to call home.

A few hours' sleep and
a cold shower and I feel better
than I have in weeks.
I can feel my mind clearing,
regaining focus.

For now, I think
I'll stay dead.
And so will Catwoman.
That way I'm free
to act without
anyone dogging me.



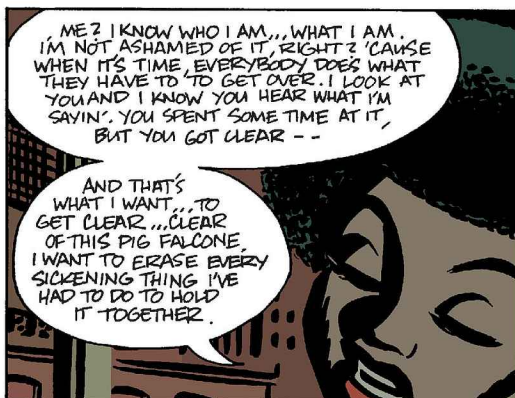
As for tonight,
we'll see what Swifty's
friend has going.
It's probably some
muscle-headed gun nut.





I DON'T HAVE NO FREE AND EASY TIME OF IT LIKE YOU THERE... I GOT RESPONSIBILITIES TO CONSIDER... MY MAMA, MY BABY GIRL --

Y'SEE, THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME, NOT THAT WAY.



ME? I KNOW WHO I AM... WHAT I AM. I'M NOT ASHAMED OF IT, RIGHT? 'CAUSE WHEN IT'S TIME, EVERYBODY DOES WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO TO GET OVER. I LOOK AT YOU AND I KNOW YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYIN'. YOU SPENT SOME TIME AT IT, BUT YOU GOT CLEAR --

AND THAT'S WHAT I WANT... TO GET CLEAR... CLEAR OF THIS PIG FALCONE. I WANT TO ERASE EVERY SICKENING THING I'VE HAD TO DO TO HOLD IT TOGETHER.



I COULD FEED YOU A PILE ABOUT MY KID, BUT THAT'S NONE OF YOUR NEVERMIND. I COULD BLUBBER ABOUT MY SICK OLD MAMA AND GET ALL COUNTRY AND WESTERN ON YOUR ASS, BUT THE STONE TRUTH IS...

IT'S ME. I'M SICK OF IT. LIKE I'D RATHER DIE, RIGHT?



SO MAYBE BY DOING ONE MORE REALLY BAD THING I CAN MAKE SOMETHING GOOD HAPPEN. FOR ME, FOR MY LITTLE GIRL.

I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT RIGHT OR WRONG...

I'M TALKING ABOUT BASIC HUMAN DIGNITY.



My God -- those words --



COME SIT DOWN CHANTEL. DINNER'S GETTING COLD.



AND WE'VE GOT A LOT TO TALK ABOUT IF WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS THING.



SUPPOSE I COULD EAT.

SUPPOSE? CHANTEL, DEAR CHILD, PREPARE FOR THE BEST MEAL YOU'VE HAD ALL NIGHT!

And so it starts -- We talk into the small of the evening, feeling each other out.



Later Chantel's words follow me home.
I'm ready to trust her.
I know how it feels to be so sickened
by your own life...
...How far a person will go
if they have a chance
to change it all.

I can't help but see a bit of myself
in Chantel...
Looking out for my sister in the
orphanage, taking care of Holly...

I usually
avoid thinking
about that
time...



But what really nailed it was
the last thing she said.
I had heard those words before...
Back before there was a bat...
or a cat.

I don't remember
what day it was.
I couldn't tell you
the name of the hotel
if my life depended
on it...

But those words.
Well, they changed
everything.

It started, like
so many things
in the east end,
with a splintering
door and the
roar of a gun.

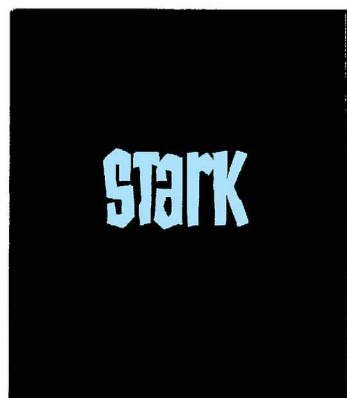


My client.
Tony 'the Toucan'
Tudeska.



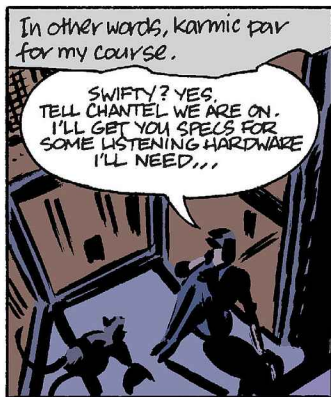
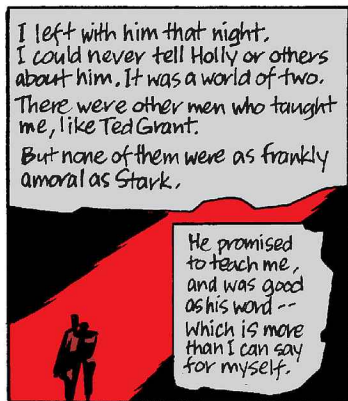
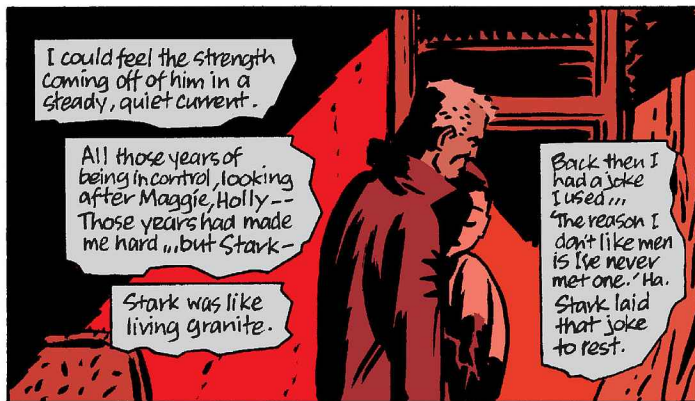
The man who chilled him.
A local legend. Some kind of
master thief. I'd seen
him around.

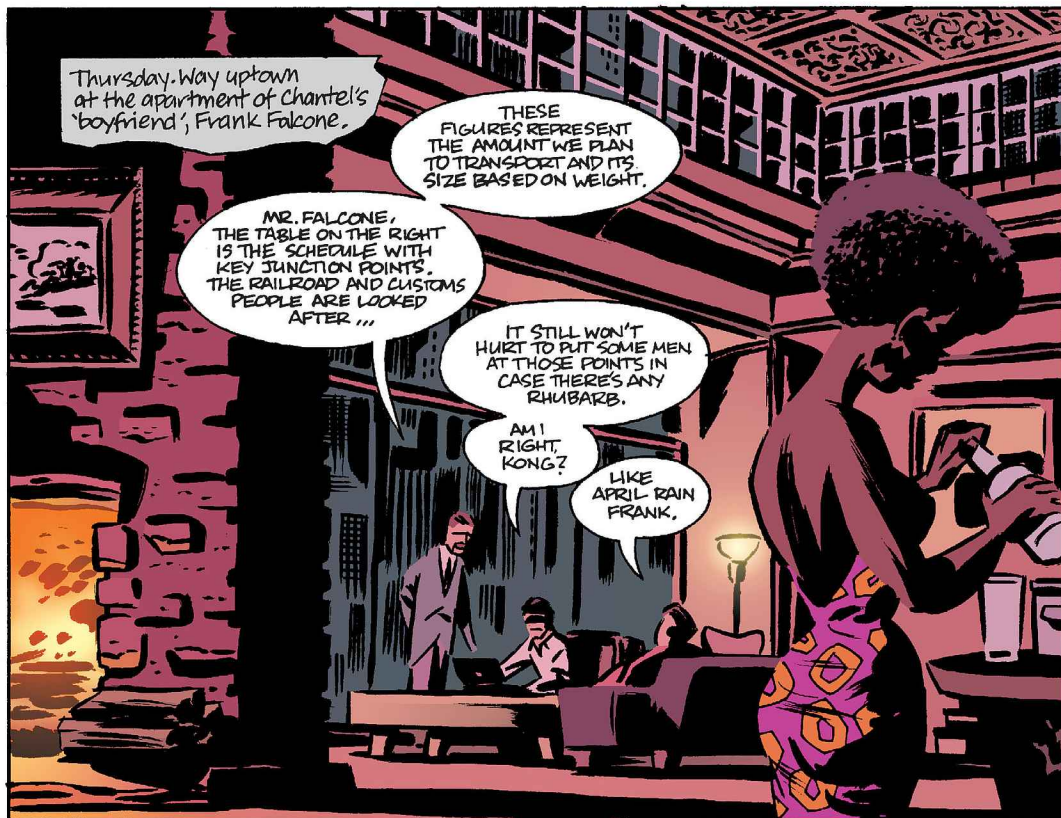
EVENING.
SELINA,
RIGHT?



STARK







Thursday. Way uptown
at the apartment of Chantel's
'boyfriend', Frank Falcone.

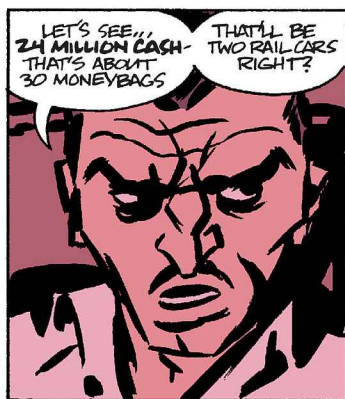
THESE
FIGURES REPRESENT
THE AMOUNT WE PLAN
TO TRANSPORT AND ITS
SIZE BASED ON WEIGHT.

MR. FALCONE,
THE TABLE ON THE RIGHT
IS THE SCHEDULE WITH
KEY JUNCTION POINTS.
THE RAILROAD AND CUSTOMS
PEOPLE ARE LOOKED
AFTER ...

IT STILL WON'T
HURT TO PUT SOME MEN
AT THOSE POINTS IN
CASE THERE'S ANY
RHUBARB.

AM I
RIGHT,
KONG?

LIKE
APRIL RAIN
FRANK.



LET'S SEE...
24 MILLION CASH-
THAT'S ABOUT
30 MONEYBAGS

THAT'LL BE
TWO RAIL CARS
RIGHT?



FALCONE



EXACTLY MR. FALCONE,
PLUS THE ENGINE AND THE
REAR CAR FOR A TOTAL
OF FOUR. SHORT
TRAIN, EH?



SHORT AND FAST.
WE MAKE IT LOOK
LIKE A TRACK
MAINTENANCE JOB.

KONG,
I WANT YOU ON
THIS RUN.

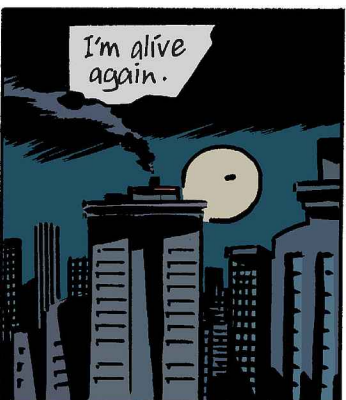
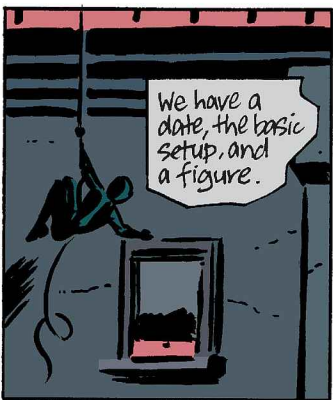
YOU GOT
IT FRANK.



CHANTEL! HONEY, ARE YOU
MAKING THE GIN OR WHAT?

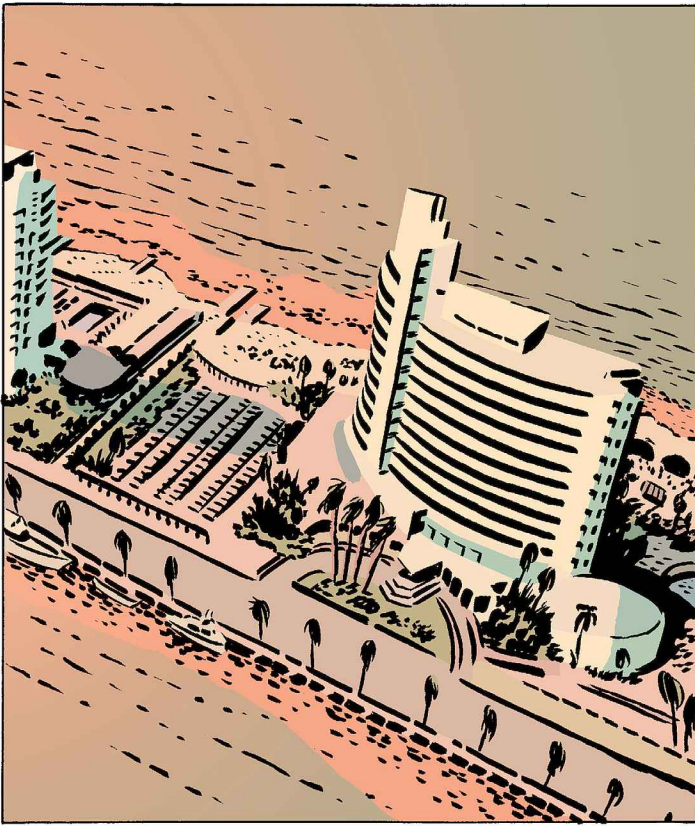


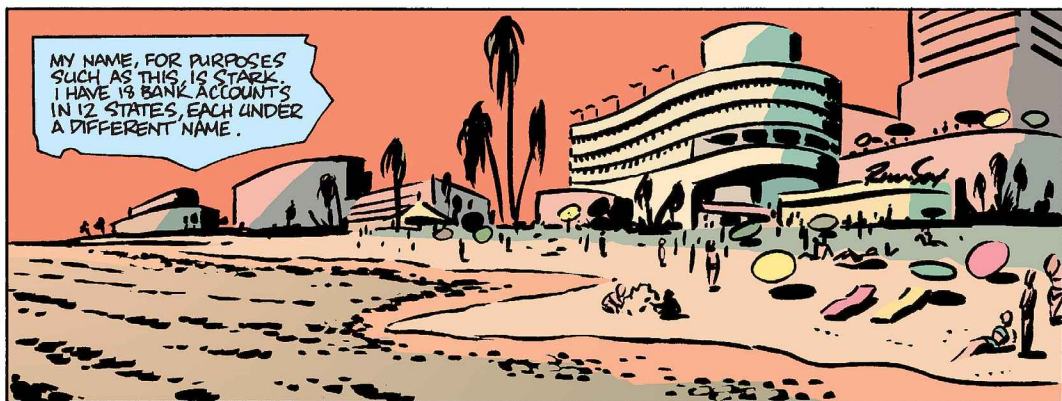
PATIENCE
BABY.

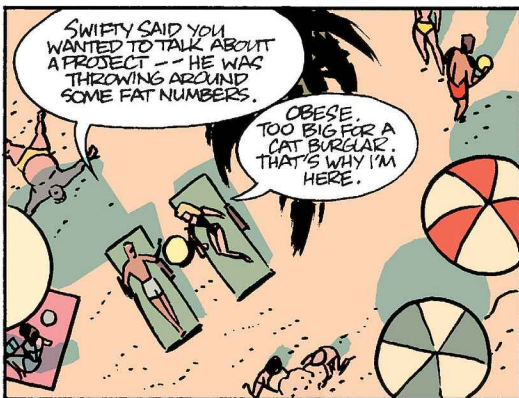
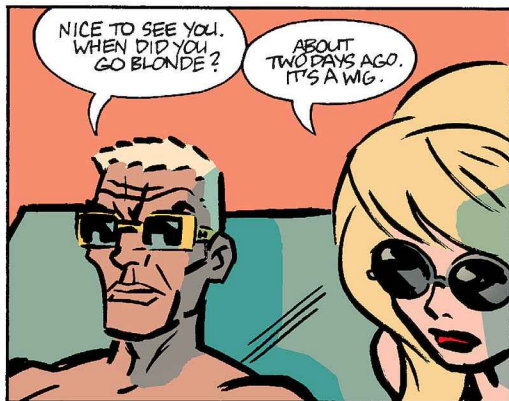


BOOK TWO

STARK







THIS WAS BACK WHEN I WAS STILL LOCAL. THE OUTFIT LEFT ME ALONE OUT OF RESPECT, AND IN RETURN I NEVER HIT THEM.

GOTHAM CITY WAS MY PLAYGROUND.

WHY DON'T YOU GROW OUT YOUR HAIR?

SELINA, WELL, SELINA CHANGED A FEW THINGS. THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL WOMEN IN MY LIFE, BUT I HAD ALWAYS KEPT IT ON A LEVEL THAT I COULD CONTROL.

HRMF.

WHY DON'T YOU?

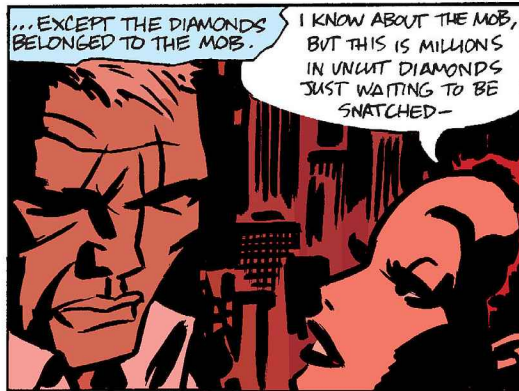
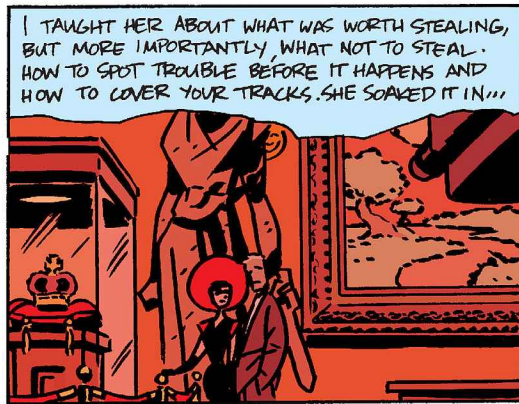
KLK!

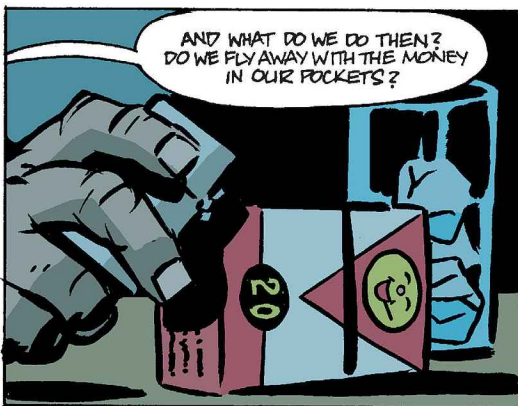
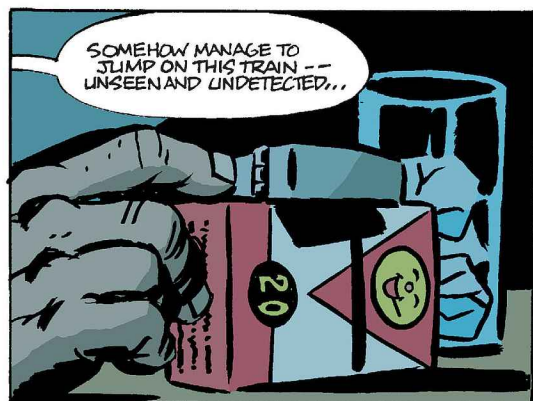
I HAD NEVER BEEN AT EASE WITH THE COMPANY OF PEOPLE, AND NEITHER HAD SHE.

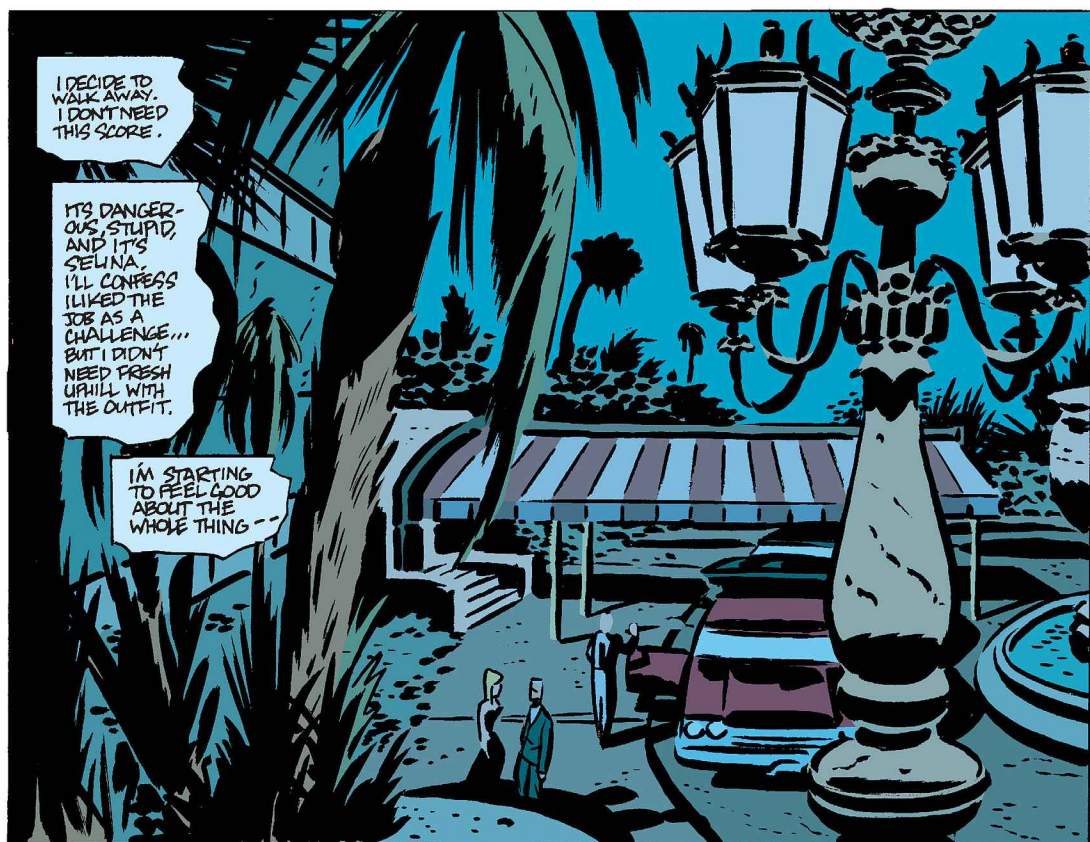
WE DECIDED TO BE ALONE TOGETHER.

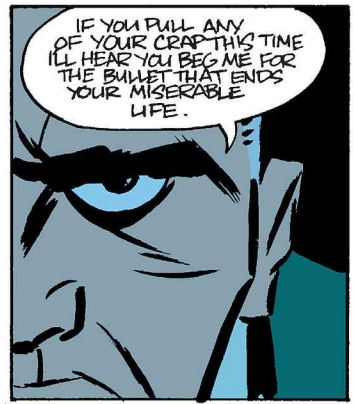
TOUGH GUYS DON'T HAVE LONG HAIR, IS THAT IT?













JEEZ SWIFTY,
WHAT HIT THIS
PLACE?

WHAT'S IT TO
YOU, SKAN--



OH IT'S YOU SELINA!
WHERE THE HECK HAVE
YOU BEEN? WE'VE GOT
TROUBLES SELINA!

TROUBLES?



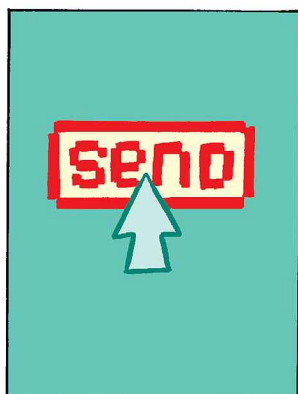
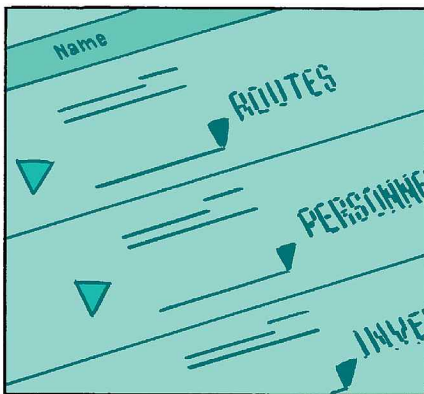
LATE YESTERDAY THIS GUY
SHOWS UP... A LOCAL PEE-EYE
NAMED SLAM BRADLEY.
HE WAS COMING ON LIKE THE
GUINS OF NAVARONE ///

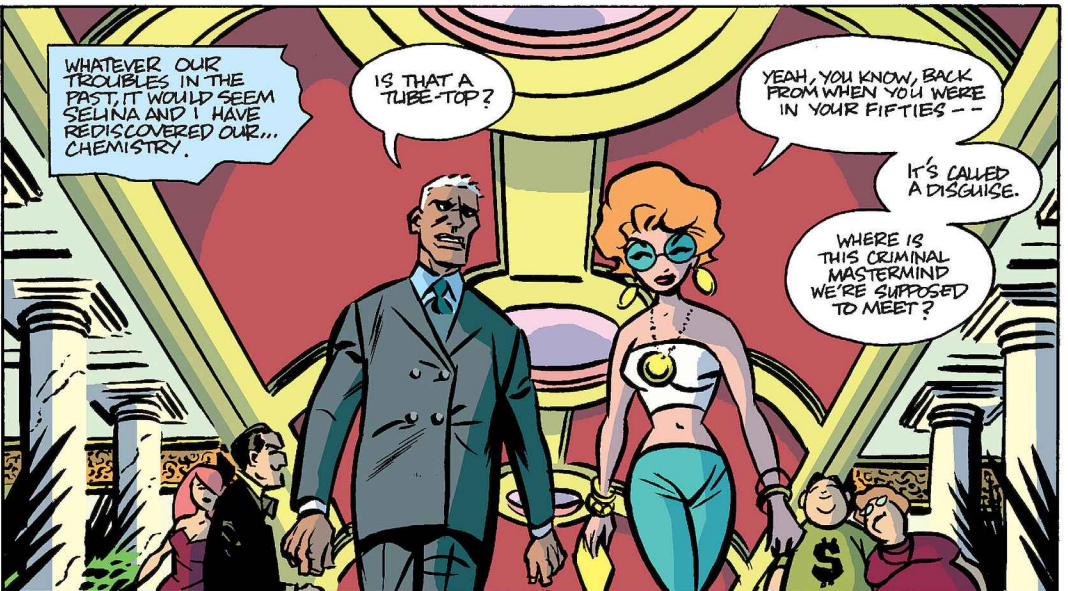
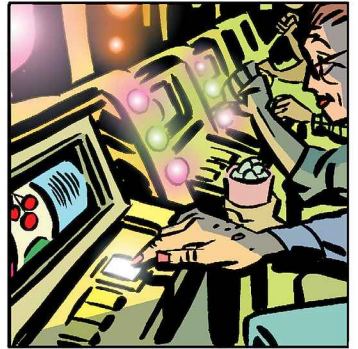
STARK MENTIONED THIS YESTERDAY,
I'VE HEARD OF BRADLEY. BIT OF A
TEMPER THEY SAY. HE DID ALL
THIS DAMAGE?



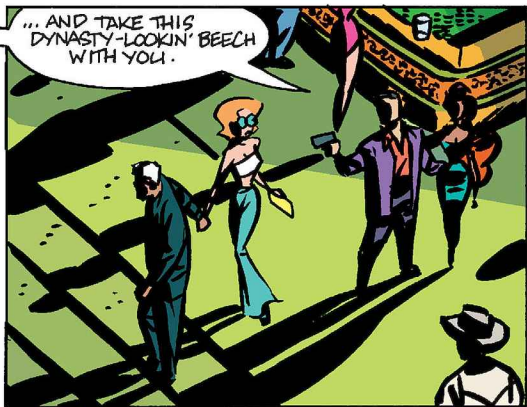
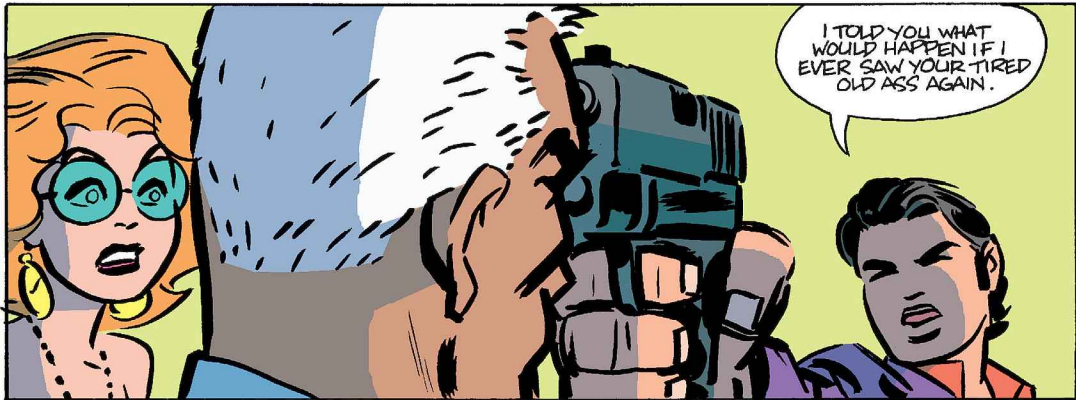
YEAH, BUT SELINA
HERE'S THE THING!-
HE WAS LOOKING
FOR YOU!

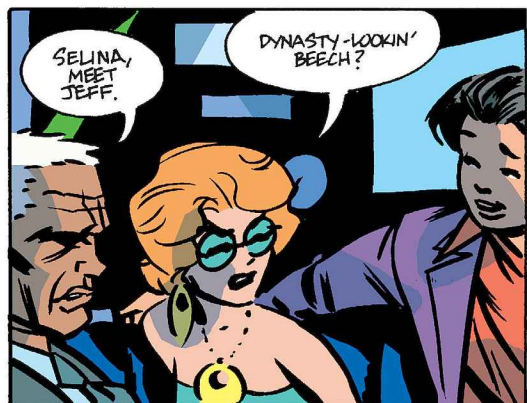
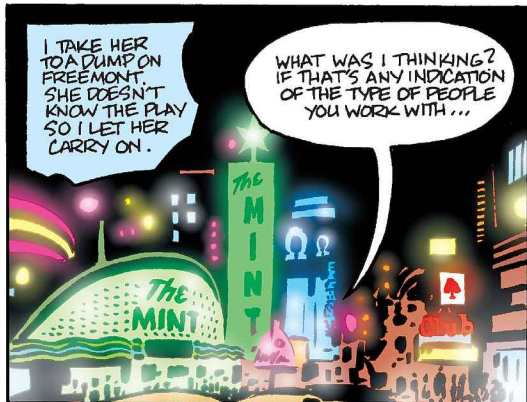
WHAT?

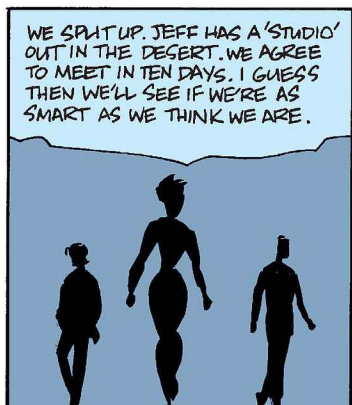
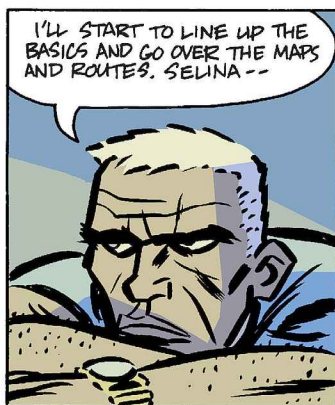












DEATH VALLEY- FOUR DAYS LATER

SPORTS, HEROES AND MOVIE STARS ASIDE, I LIVE IN WHAT COULD BE CONSIDERED A LAVISH FASHION.

BUT FOR ALL THE REWARDS, I NEVER FEEL MORE PEACE THAN WHEN I'M WORKING.

IN THE SERVICE I ENDED UP IN THE SIGNAL CORPS AND THEN SPECIAL OPS. I LEARNED TWO THINGS - HOW TO PLAN AND ACT UNDER PRESSURE ... AND HOW TO KILL.

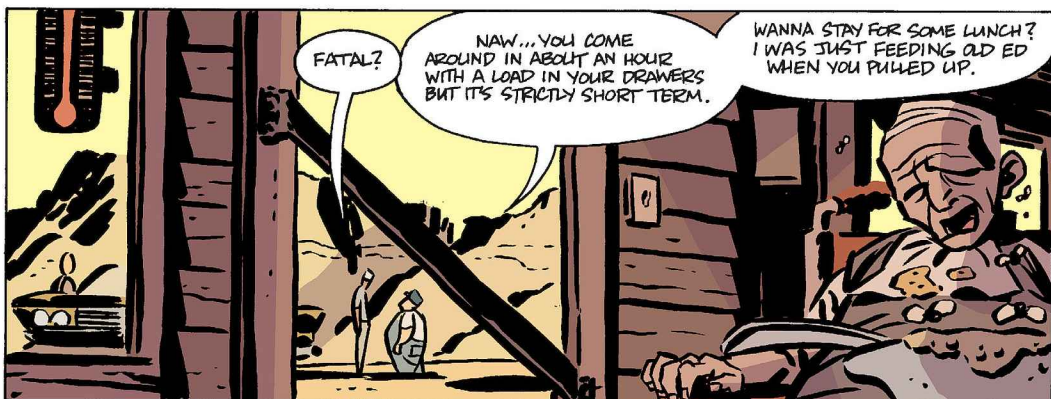
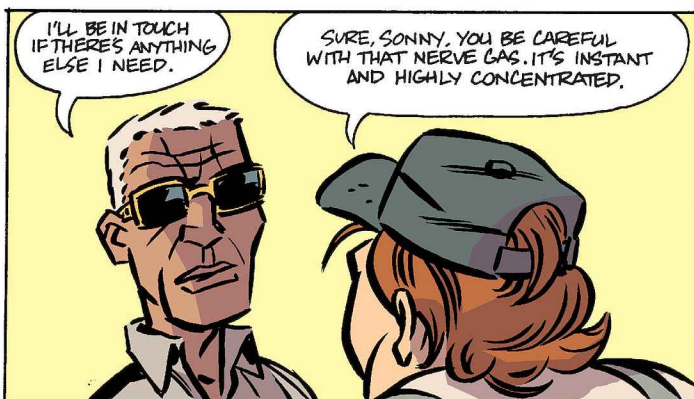
SELINA AND JEFF ARE YOUNG AND MOTIVATED. I LEAVE THE CREATIVE THINKING TO THEM. CRAP, I JUST FOUND OUT WHAT EMAIL IS.

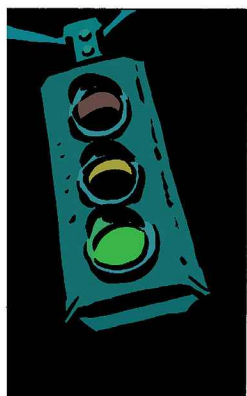
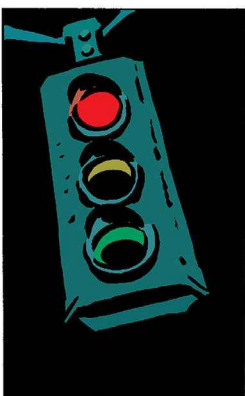
BUT IT'S NOT JUST THE SMASH AND GRAB - YOU HAVE TO HAVE A PLAN THAT COVERS YOUR OUT - TOO MANY COWBOYS DON'T THINK PAST GETTING THE MONEY IN THEIR HANDS.

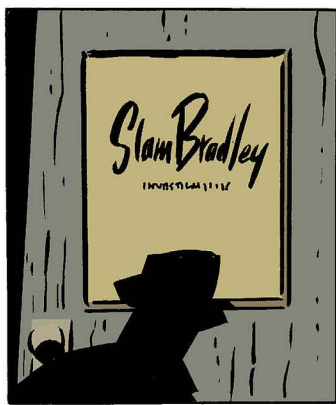
TODAY I'M GOING TO SEE 'MOM' - NOT MY MOM - I WAS STATE-RAISED. DON'T EVEN KNOW MY REAL NAME. THIS 'MOM' IS AN ASSOCIATE OF MINE.

REBELLO
HIGH-TONED SON OF







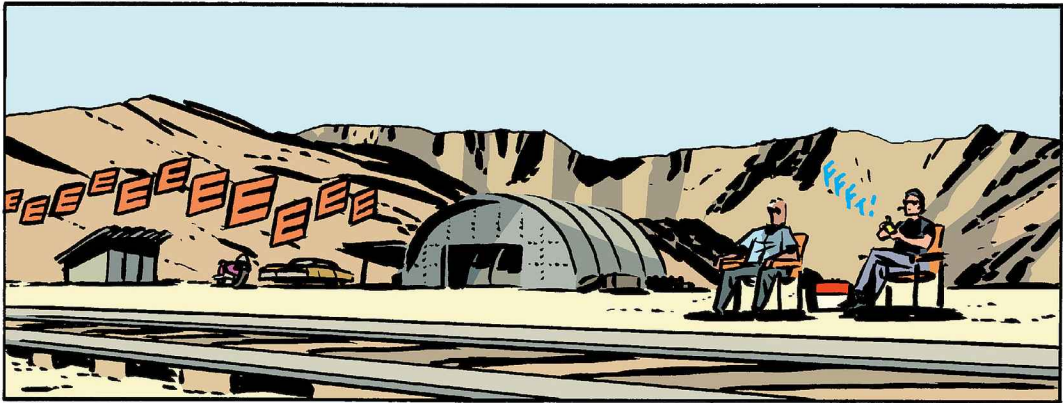


ABANDONED RAILHEAD UTAH DESERT

THIS IS INSANE.

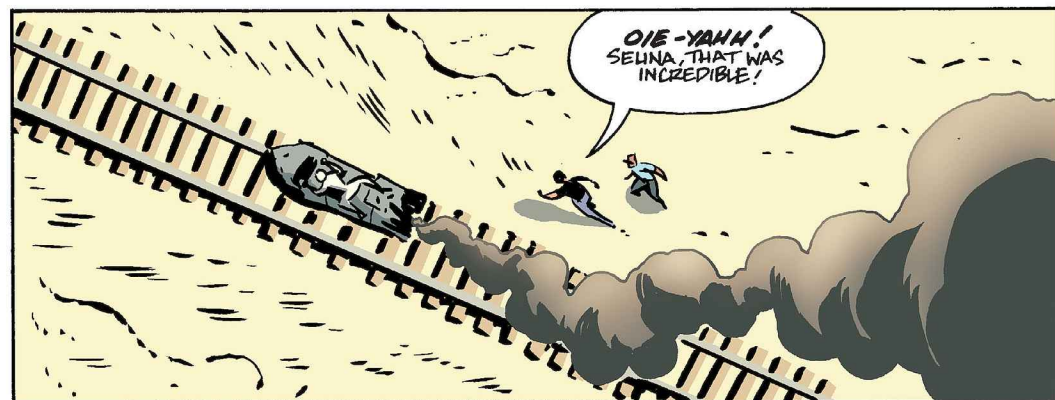
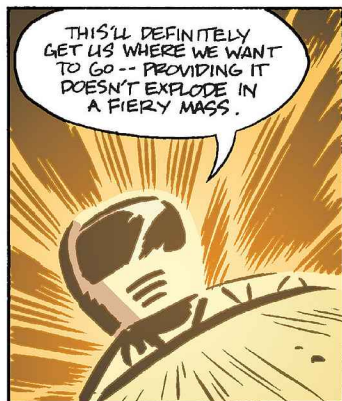
BEER?

BEER?



A comic book illustration of a large explosion. The word "BOOM" is written in large, bold, orange letters with a black outline, positioned in the center of the image. The background is filled with a massive, billowing cloud of orange and yellow smoke or fire, with dark brown outlines suggesting the shape of the explosion. Numerous small, dark brown specks and lines are scattered throughout the scene, representing debris and the intensity of the blast. The overall style is reminiscent of classic comic book art, with a focus on dramatic, high-contrast colors and dynamic shapes.

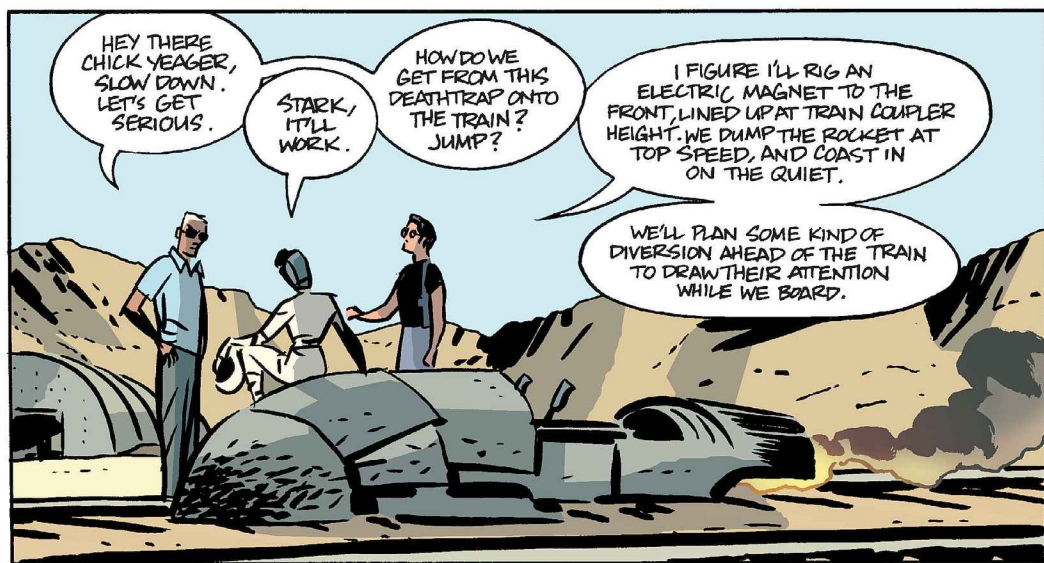






FANTASTIC!
JEFF, YOU HAVE GOT TO
TRY THIS! IT'S AMAZING!

CAN I GO
AGAIN?



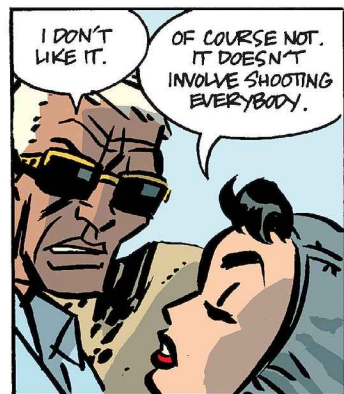
HEY THERE
CHICK YEAGER,
SLOW DOWN.
LET'S GET
SERIOUS.

STARK,
IT'LL
WORK..

HOW DO WE
GET FROM THIS
DEATHTRAP ONTO
THE TRAIN?
JUMP?

I FIGURE I'LL RIG AN
ELECTRIC MAGNET TO THE
FRONT, LINED UP AT TRAIN COUPLER
HEIGHT. WE DUMP THE ROCKET AT
TOP SPEED, AND COAST IN
ON THE QUIET.

WE'LL PLAN SOME KIND OF
DIVERSION AHEAD OF THE TRAIN
TO DRAW THEIR ATTENTION
WHILE WE BOARD.



I DON'T
LIKE IT.

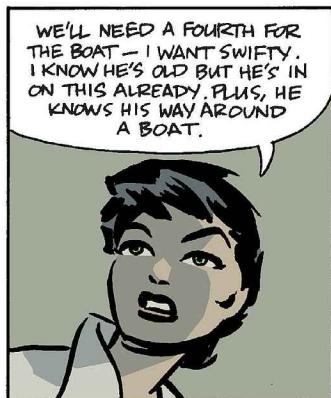
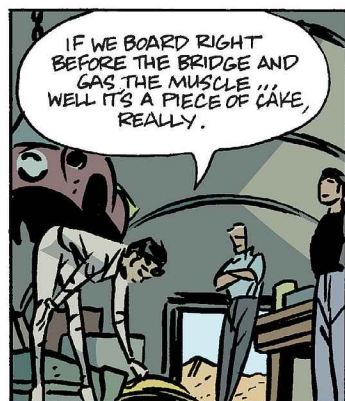
OF COURSE NOT.
IT DOESN'T
INVOLVE SHOOTING
EVERYBODY.



HEY LUCY -
RICKY--



WE STILL HAVE NO IDEA HOW
TO GET OFF THE DAMN TRAIN.





LAKE FLORID -- TWO DAYS LATER

...SO JUNIOR, THE BOAT LOOKS LIKE A TUB BUT IT CAN OVERTURN ANYTHING ON THE WATER. THAT'S A 'SLEEPER'.

I GET IT... I THINK, TELL ME STARK, YOU AND SELINA, YOU HAD A THING, HEY?

COCKTAIL LOUNGE
BOWL
COFFEE SHOP
C L D BEEP

BOWL

THAT WAS BACK IN THE DAY. WHEN I WAS STILL YOUNG AND FOOLISH.

IT... AH, DIDN'T WORK OUT.

SO, SHE DUMPED YOUR ASS, HUH?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT... BUT THERE WAS MORE TO IT THAN THAT, Y'SEE...

SHE WAS LIVING TWO LIVES.

SO WHAT HAPPENED? SOME FRESH YOUNG GUY SWOOP DOWN AND STEAL HER FROM YOU, HEY?

YEAH, YOU COULD SAY THAT.

MUST'VE BEEN A TOUGH HOMBRE TO STEAL YOUR WOMAN - WHO WAS IT, SUPERMAN?


WHAT DID I SAY, HEY?





BOOK THREE

SLAM



It was a dark
and stormy night.

What do you want from me?
I'm a detective...not a writer.

I suppose it all
started when the Mayor
hired me to find
a dead woman...



The notorious jewel thief Catwoman had apparently died evading capture after murdering a Gotham socialite named Selina Kyle.

please-

The mayor didn't believe she was dead and it was my job to find her. The trail of the Catwoman led me to a startling secret.

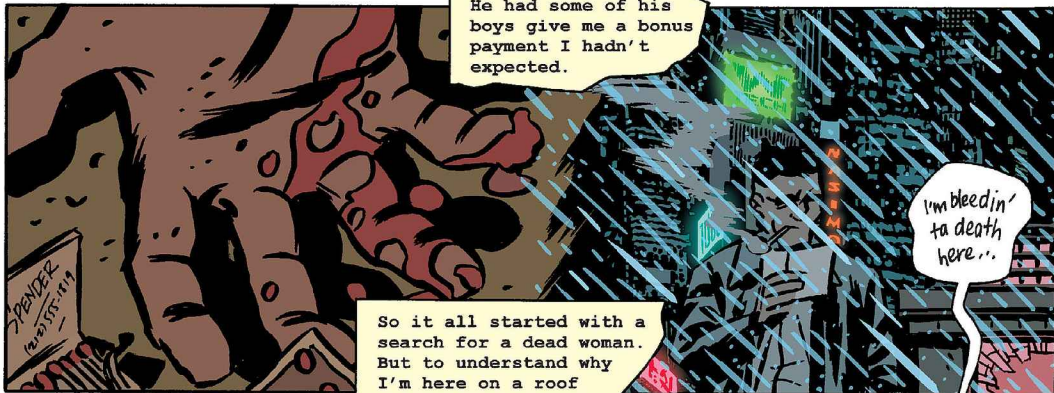


Not only was Selina Kyle alive, she was Catwoman.

But when it came down to it, I couldn't turn her in.

akkk!!

I told the Mayor it was a bust. He had some of his boys give me a bonus payment I hadn't expected.



So it all started with a search for a dead woman. But to understand why I'm here on a roof in the rain...

I'm bleedin' to death here...



...we have to talk about another dead woman named Chantel.

SHUT UP, FALCONER

The Mayor's cops had roughed me up pretty good. In the following days my face healed but other pains lingered. I found myself killing spare time hanging out in places where I hoped I might see her...



I was hanging out near Swifty's and I see a young pro come out of his shop. I'm smiling to myself about old Swifty and then I make her...



...Chantel something, Frank Falcone's thingy. And she looks a little uptight.

I sit back, wondering what some kept mob trim is doing with the likes of Swifty. I must've went out, cause next thing I know I'm waking up to a car horn.



I see Selina and Swifty float past me... she's waving. It's like a surreal scene from some fruity art film.



Once I'm sure I'm awake, I decide to follow them. Except all the tires on my crate are flat.



Selina has played me like a snot-nose. I gotta laugh.

I kill an hour looking for a connection between Selina, Swifty and a mob heavy like Falcone. I can't figure what it adds up to, but I know it can't be good news. It starts to rain.



Nice.

Something big was going on. I could feel it rolling in around me like the anxious discomfort that precedes a violent illness. Swifty and Selina weren't coming back.

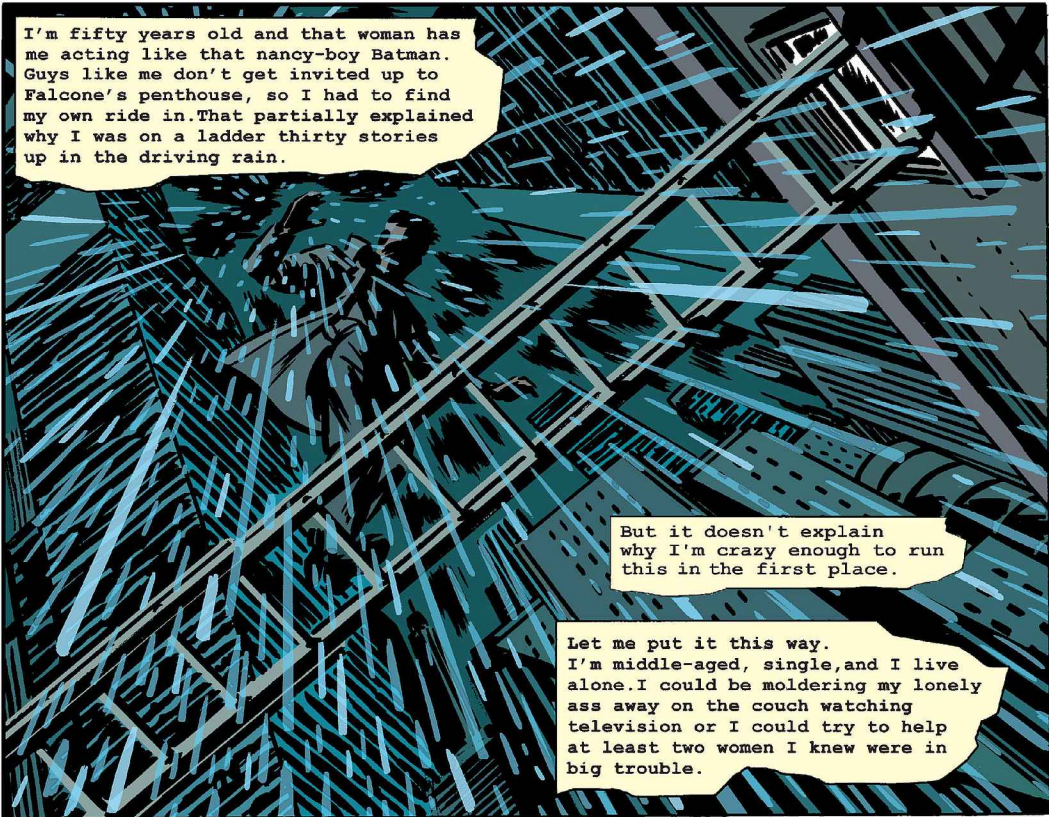


If I wanted in, I'd have to find them.

Chantel and that worried look on her face were my only lead. That meant going to have a talk with Falcone. And that meant going in heavy. Like a favorite song, the skies turned it up in sympathy.



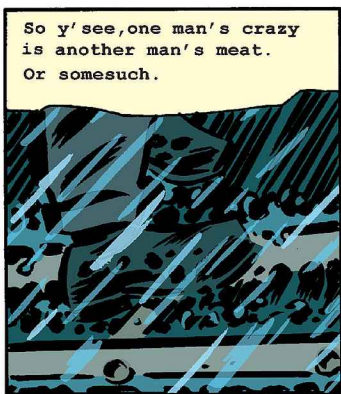
Wish I had my damn hat.

A large comic book panel showing a man in a dark suit climbing a long, narrow ladder that extends diagonally across the frame. He is on a rooftop, and the scene is filled with heavy rain, represented by numerous blue and white diagonal streaks. In the background, the silhouettes of city buildings are visible under a dark sky.


I'm fifty years old and that woman has me acting like that nancy-boy Batman. Guys like me don't get invited up to Falcone's penthouse, so I had to find my own ride in. That partially explained why I was on a ladder thirty stories up in the driving rain.

But it doesn't explain why I'm crazy enough to run this in the first place.

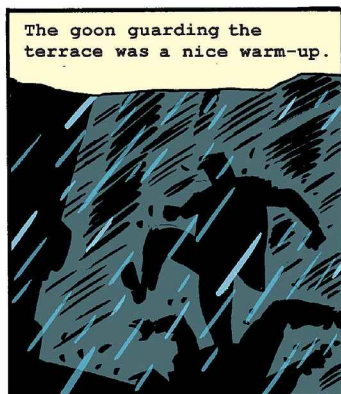
Let me put it this way. I'm middle-aged, single, and I live alone. I could be moldering my lonely ass away on the couch watching television or I could try to help at least two women I knew were in big trouble.

A smaller comic book panel showing a man in a dark suit running across a rooftop. The scene is filled with heavy rain, represented by numerous blue and white diagonal streaks. The man is in the foreground, and the background shows the silhouettes of city buildings.

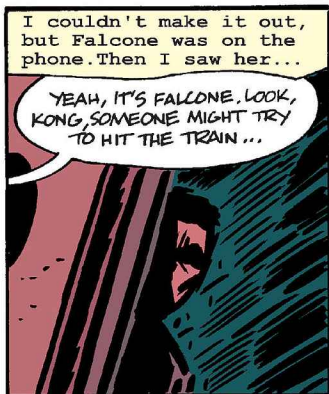
So y' see, one man's crazy is another man's meat. Or somesuch.

A comic book panel showing a man in a dark suit standing on a rooftop. He is looking towards the right. In the background, a city skyline is visible, with a large building having many lit windows. The scene is filled with heavy rain, represented by numerous blue and white diagonal streaks.

I made the roof of Falcone's penthouse just as the screaming starts.


A comic book panel showing a man in a dark suit running across a rooftop. The scene is filled with heavy rain, represented by numerous blue and white diagonal streaks. The man is in the foreground, and the background shows the silhouettes of city buildings.

The goon guarding the terrace was a nice warm-up.

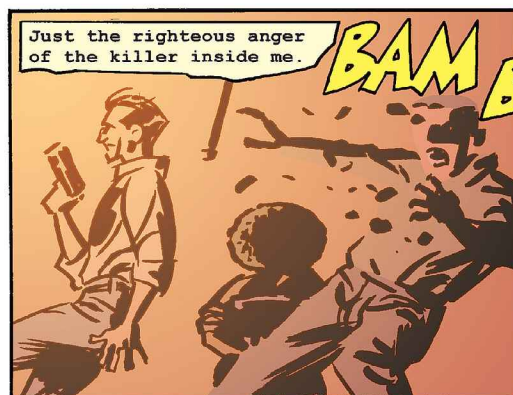
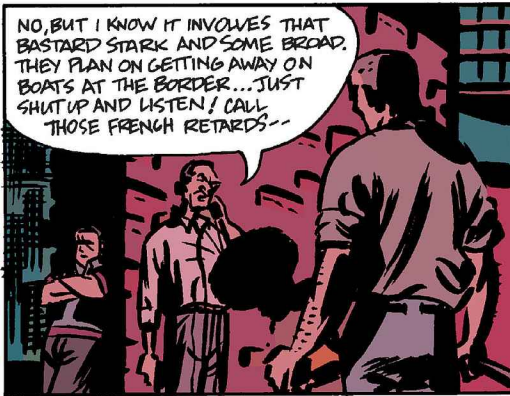
A comic book panel showing a man in a dark suit looking out from a window. He is looking towards the left. The scene is filled with heavy rain, represented by numerous blue and white diagonal streaks.

I couldn't make it out, but Falcone was on the phone. Then I saw her...

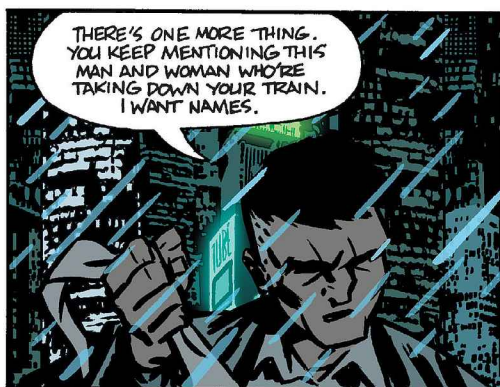
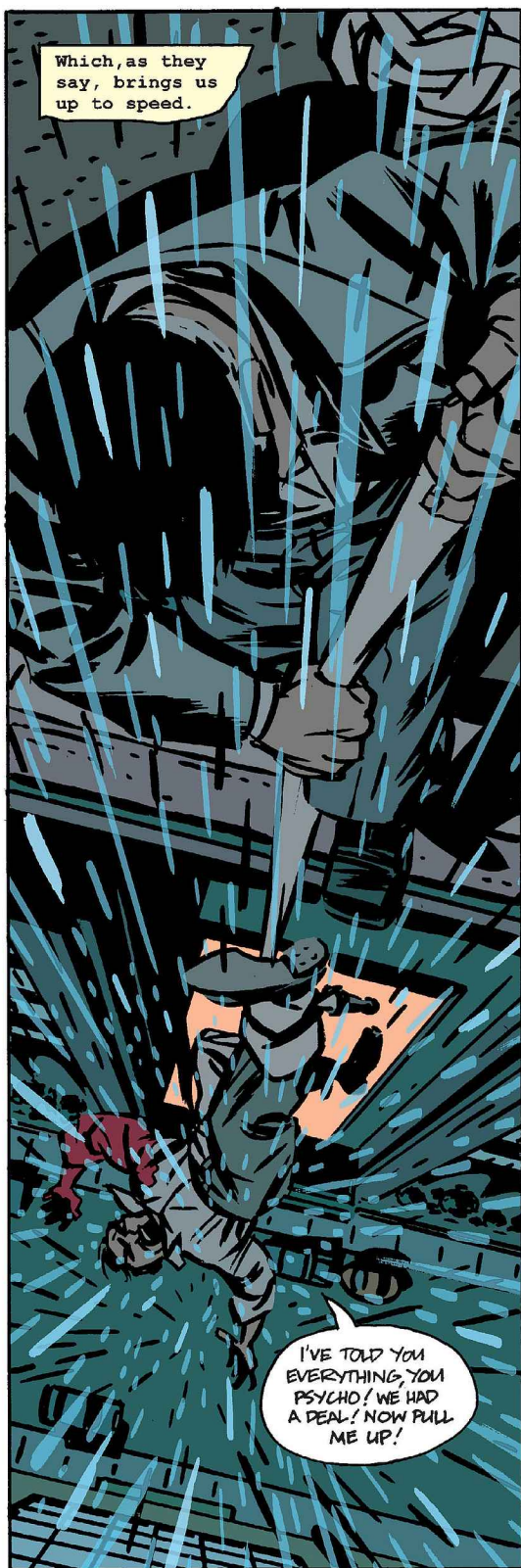
YEAH, IT'S FALCONE. LOOK, KONG, SOMEONE MIGHT TRY TO HIT THE TRAIN ...

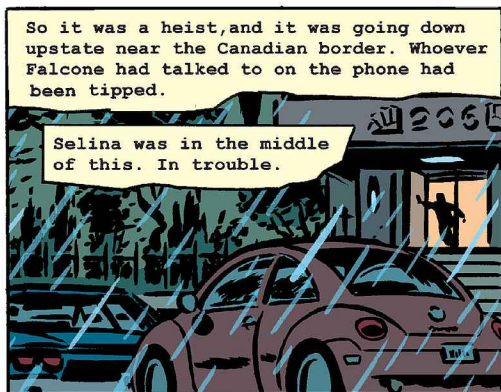
A comic book panel showing a close-up of a man's face. He has a surprised or concerned expression, with wide eyes and a slightly open mouth. The scene is filled with heavy rain, represented by numerous blue and white diagonal streaks.

I knew it was Chantel from her dress, but sweet mother--her face.









BORDER -- CANADIAN SIDE



THAT FOOL FALCONE ... 'E SAY
SOMEONE IS GOING TO TRY
TO 'IT THE TRAIN, SO WE
CHECK THE COVES.

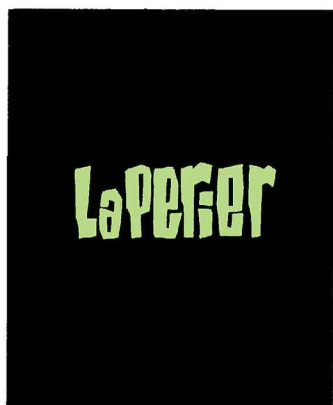
SO AGAIN WE
BAIL OUT THESE
COWBOYS, EH,
HENRI?



I THINK PERHAPS WE
WAIT TO SEE WHAT IS
THE DEAL, EH?



LaPerrier



MAYBE WE ROB THE
ROBBERS AND KEEP
OUR 'EROIN, YES?



BORDER -- U.S. SIDE



IT'S ALL
SET STARK.

I CAN BLOW
IT BY REMOTE.
BELIEVE ME, IT'LL
DISTRACT THEM.



OIE-YAH, STARK,
I PROMISE, MUCHO
PYROTECHNICA FOR
SURE ...



YES, YES ... SWIFTY
SHOULD BE CALLING
IN ANY MINUTE ...
OKAY, SEE YOU IN
THIRTY MINUTES.





BORDER - CANADIAN SIDE

STARK?
YEAH, IT'S
SWIFTY.

WE'RE GOOD
TO GO HERE,,,
YEP--UH...

TWO CARS,
ONE TRUCK, JUST
LIKE YOU SAID.

NAH, I'M FINE. SEE
YOU ON THE RIVER,,,
GOOD LUCK.

BON SOIR,
OLD MAN.

KLIK

WELCOME TO CANADA.
I AM MONSIEUR LAPERIER.

AND THIS IS JEAN-MARC.
DAT WAS AN INNERESTING
PHONE CALL, YES?

I THINK JEAN-MARC WILL WAIT
HERE WHILE YOU AND I GO FOR A
BOATRIDE, YES?

I know, I know...a guy my age should be ashamed of himself, right? Except it's not like that...it's more like a fondness; a fascination. And the kind of deep concern you usually reserve for the special few in your life. You read the book on this woman and you gotta admire her.

It took about an hour and a half to find a pilot and talk him into this stunt. As usual, it all came down to money.


I tell him to try and track the northbound rail lines, but it's ceiling zero out there, and the visibility is pitiful. He takes us above the storm, to make better time.

Falcone mentioned a dude named Stark, and that has me worried. He's a master thief and a cold-blooded killer. Never been caught, whereabouts unknown.

Stark was bad company at the best of times, but it was something more...something about Selina. It nags at me like a bad tooth...

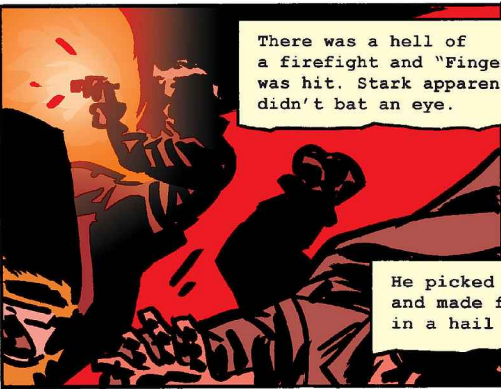
Then I remember. I hadn't heard the name recently--I'd read it. In the Catwoman file I had put together during my investigation.

The files I burned for Selina. I try to remember the details...




...it was a diamond robbery. Stark and an associate named "Fingers" Marotta took down a Falcone courier for about half a million in uncut stones.

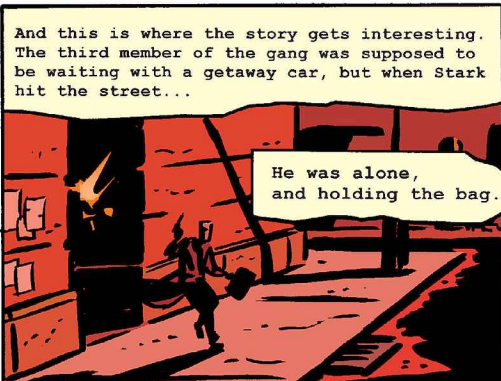
But something went wrong.



There was a hell of a firefight and "Fingers" was hit. Stark apparently didn't bat an eye.




He picked up that bag and made for the street in a hail of bullets.

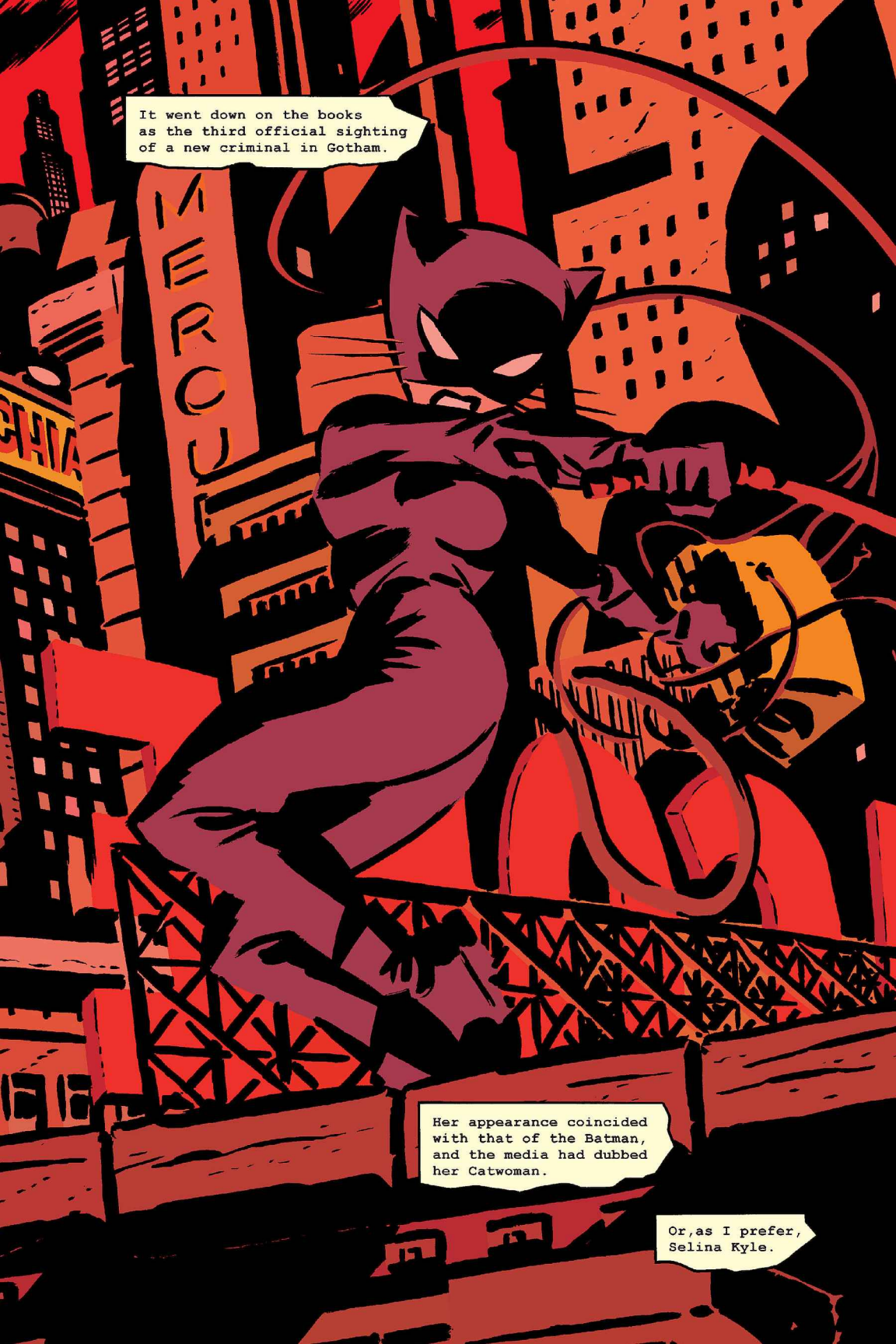


And this is where the story gets interesting. The third member of the gang was supposed to be waiting with a getaway car, but when Stark hit the street...

He was alone, and holding the bag.



This part was told to the cops by an eyewitness. A homeless shmoe or somesuch... A whip snaked down out of the night, plucking the diamonds from Stark's hand.

A comic book illustration of Catwoman (Selina Kyle) in her black suit and mask, crouching on a rooftop. She is looking down at a yellow bag or object on the ground. The background features a stylized Gotham City skyline with red and orange buildings. A large, curved, metallic structure, possibly a bridge or part of a building, arches over her. The overall color palette is dominated by reds, oranges, and blacks.

It went down on the books
as the third official sighting
of a new criminal in Gotham.

Her appearance coincided
with that of the Batman,
and the media had dubbed
her Catwoman.

Or, as I prefer,
Selina Kyle.



It's hard to imagine what went through Stark's mind. Did he know who was behind the mask?



What happened to the driver of the getaway car?



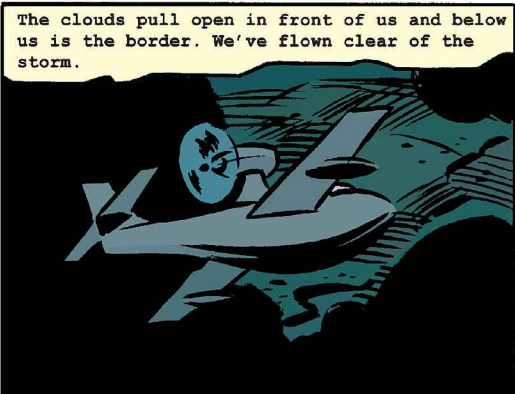
According to the witness, Stark just stood there without firing a shot, as the sound of a cracking whip took her away into the night.



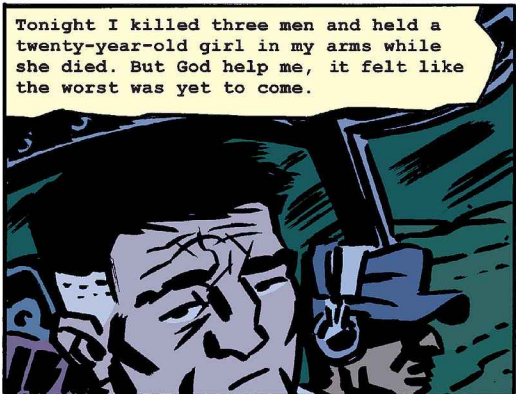
The boys got hold of "Fingers" before he checked out. He gave up Stark and "some girl" before he died on them.



As for Stark, he escaped with his life. But his days in Gotham were over for good.



The clouds pull open in front of us and below us is the border. We've flown clear of the storm.



Tonight I killed three men and held a twenty-year-old girl in my arms while she died. But God help me, it felt like the worst was yet to come.

BOOK FOUR

SCORE







BARRROO







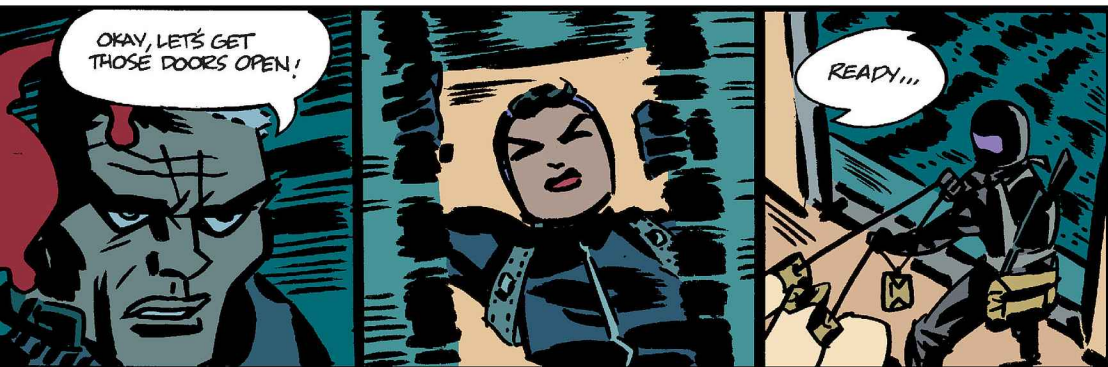
TOK TOK TOK TOK TOK












A comic book panel showing a character in a blue and white costume falling into water. The character is upside down, with their head near the top of the frame and legs pointing downwards. They are wearing a blue jumpsuit with white gloves and shoes. The water is depicted with dark blue and black swirling lines, suggesting a deep fall. In the bottom left corner, a small portion of another character's head and shoulders is visible, looking up at the falling character.

What a rush!
Just one more
unpleasant
task...

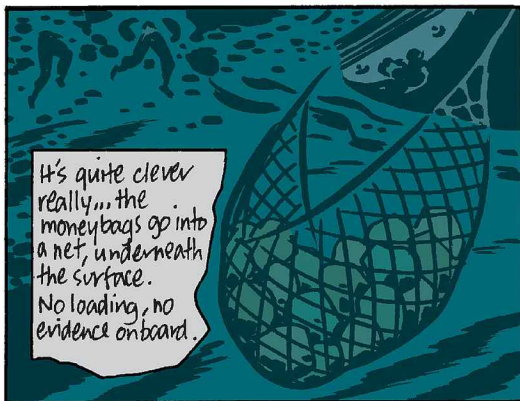
Costume
or not,
this cat
does not
like the
water.



I swim towards the dim outline of the floats.
The boat slowly grows in the darkness...



It's quite clever
really... the
moneybags go into
a net, underneath
the surface.
No loading, no
evidence onboard.



For a moment
I'm consumed by
the childish fear
that something
horrible will rise
from the depths
and snatch me
away... But
Stark is the only
predator in this
water - and he's
my predator.

SELINA!
IS THAT YOU!

WELL, IT
ISN'T ANGIE
DICKINSON.



OIE-YAH!
THERE SHE IS!
I THOUGHT MAYBE
YOU DROWN, HEY?

AND LET YOU CLAIM
MY SHARE? FAT CHANCE
PRETTY BOY.



SO NOW THAT
I'M A MILLIONAIRE,
MAYBE YOU BE
MY DATE, HUH?

SORRY JEFF.
I LIKE 'EM RICH AND
TOO OLD TO
RUN AWAY.

HRMF.



I TOLD YOU
STARK, SELINA
IS OUR LUCKY
GIRL, HEY?



FUP
FUP





There's a moment when you discover the truth about how someone feels about you.



After we hit the water, the Frenchman bolted.

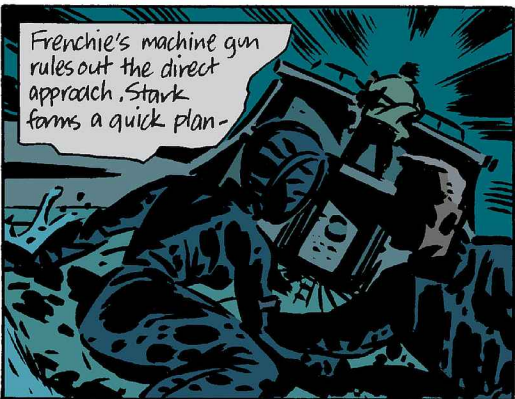


You see, Stark had a hold of the net when the boat got underway. He couldn't leave me there, but he didn't... He took my hand.

We'd see it to the end together.



Frenchie's machine gun rules out the direct approach, Stark forms a quick plan--



I figure get rid of him and be done with it, but Stark wants to know who this clown works for. We do it his way.



HEY!!!



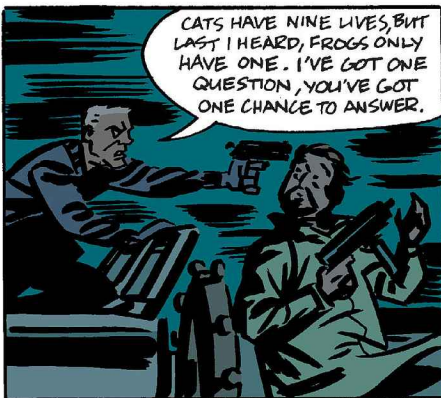
I hope Frenchie likes girls.



WELL NOW, WHAT 'AVE WE HERE - YOU MUST 'AVE NINE LIVES, THERE.



CATS HAVE NINE LIVES, BUT LAST I HEARD, FROGS ONLY HAVE ONE. I'VE GOT ONE QUESTION, YOU'VE GOT ONE CHANCE TO ANSWER.



I wish I could hear them--

WHO ARE YOU WORKING WITH? FALCONE OR HER?









My instincts tell me to get as far away from here as fast as possible. But I have to check the cave. If I want to stay 'dead,' I better make sure there are no loose ends.

I can feel a tidal wave of remorse inside me. I choke it back, and wade into shore.



THERE'S NO ONE HERE BUT US, SELINA.



SLAM?
SLAM BRADLEY?



CHANTEL'S DEAD SELINA.



CHANTEL?
DEAD?
HOW--

THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT. WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?



OTHERS? THERE ARE NO OTHERS,,, ALL THE BAD MEN ARE DEAD SHERIFF,,,

EASY SELINA -
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER. WHAT ABOUT STARK?



GONE.

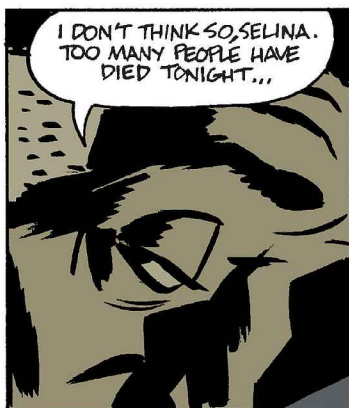


WHAT NOW, SELINA?



WHAT NOW? WHAT NOW IS I GET BACK ON THAT BOAT AND HEAD NORTH. YOU GO BACK TO GOTHAM AND KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

WHEN I GET BACK I'LL BUY YOU A NEW SET OF RADIALS.





YOU... YOU
SHOT ME!



DON'T BE A BABY. YOU'LL LIVE,
WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY
FOR ANYONE ELSE WHO
TRUSTED ME TONIGHT.



HERE, SIT UP...
LET ME GET THAT.

NOW, I NEED YOU TO
LISTEN TO ME,
SLAM BRADLEY.



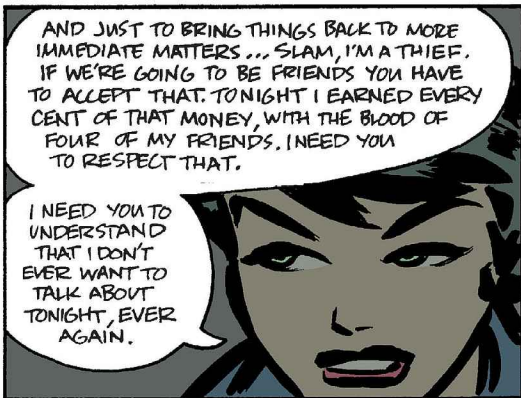
THE FACT THAT SO MANY PEOPLE
DIED FOR THIS MONEY IS EXACTLY WHY
I CAN'T LET YOU STOP ME.

I'M NOT SURE HOW, BUT I
NEED TO SET THINGS RIGHT.



IF CHANTEL IS... DIDN'T MAKE IT, WHO'S
GOING TO SEE TO IT HER DAUGHTER AND
MOTHER ARE LOOKED AFTER? YOU? GOTHAM
CITY SOCIAL SERVICES? DON'T MAKE ME
LAUGH. CHANTEL DIED TO GIVE THEM
A BETTER LIFE. NOW IT'S
UP TO ME, I GUESS.

I WON'T LET
YOU, OR ANY
MAN STOP ME.



AND JUST TO BRING THINGS BACK TO MORE
IMMEDIATE MATTERS... SLAM, I'M A THIEF.
IF WE'RE GOING TO BE FRIENDS YOU HAVE
TO ACCEPT THAT. TONIGHT I EARNED EVERY
CENT OF THAT MONEY, WITH THE BLOOD OF
FOUR OF MY FRIENDS. I NEED YOU
TO RESPECT THAT.

I NEED YOU TO
UNDERSTAND
THAT I DON'T
EVER WANT TO
TALK ABOUT
TONIGHT, EVER
AGAIN.



SELINA --
DID YOU LOVE
HIM?



I DON'T KNOW
THE MEANING OF
THE WORD.

DOWN 70 MILES NORTH



THE END



... MILLIONAIRE DEVELOPER AND PHILANTHROPIST ALEXANDER GOODWIN WAS THEN REPORTED TO HAVE CREDITED THE ENIGMATIC BATMAN WITH THE CAPTURE OF THE KIDNAPPERS AND SAFE RETURN OF THEIR DAUGHTER JUSTINE...



GOD BLESS THIS BATMAN, WHOEVER HE IS. HE'S... HE'S A GOSH-DARN HERO.



THAT, OF COURSE, WAS SIX MONTHS AGO, AND TONIGHT WE GO LIVE TO SUMMER GLEESON IN ROBINSON PARK FOR A RELATED STORY. SUMMER?



THANKS, DAVE. I'M HERE TODAY FOR AN EVENT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO ATTRACT MOST OF GOTHAM'S LUMINARIES AND A FEW THOUSAND SPECTATORS. BUT IT IS AN EVENT THAT HAS LEFT GOTHAM'S CITIZENS SHARPLY DIVIDED.



... HE SAVED MY COUSIN'S LIFE, Y'KNOW? I MEAN, I THINK IT'S ALL SOLID... HE'S LIKE SOME KINDA FREAKY INSTITUTION.



I THINK IT'S WRONG ON SO MANY LEVELS. I MEAN, SUMMER-- THE MAN IS A CRIMINAL. I DON'T KNOW THAT WE NEED TO DEIFY A MAN LIKE THAT.



... AND SO, BATMAN-- WHOEVER YOU MAY BE, BY WAY OF THANKS, I GIVE TO YOU A TRIBUTE WORTHY OF OUR CITY'S CHAMPION...





THE MUSEUM

DARWYN COOKE WRITER **BILL WRAY** ILLUSTRATOR **RICK PARKER** LETTERER **MARK CHIARELLO** EDITOR **VALERIE D'ORAZIO** ASST. EDITOR



SATURDAY



SUNDAY



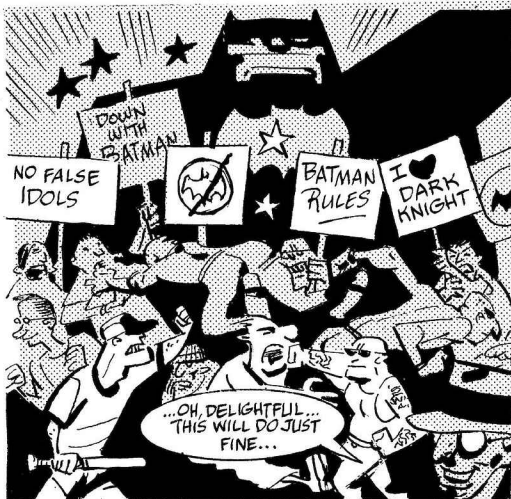
MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



FRIDAY

SIR, I BELIEVE
YOU SHOULD TURN
ON CHANNEL
SIX.

75

...NARCISSISTIC FASCIST WITHOUT
ANY REGARD
FOR SOCIETY'S
LAWS.

THIS BATMAN
REPRESENTS OUR CITY'S
WORST IMPULSES AND
SICKEST FANTASIES.

I AM, AFTER ALL,
DR. HUGO STRANGE,
AND BELIEVE ME...

...I KNOW
ALL ABOUT
SICK
FANTASIES.

AT EXACTLY
MIDNIGHT I WILL
RID GOTHAM'S GOOD
CITIZENS OF THIS
PAGAN IDOL. AS FOR
SUMMER GLEESON,
WELL...

I'M WAY
AHEAD OF
YOU.

Klick!

CAM ONE

CAM TWO

CAM THREE

...SHE'S NO
LOIS LANE.

I HAVE NO DEMANDS. NO
RANSOM. THIS IS MY GIFT
TO THE PEOPLE OF GOTHAM.
YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES TO
EVACUATE THE PARK.



ALL UNITS PROCEED
WITH EVAC AND SEAL
THE PARK EXITS.

LEXCORP DETONATOR WITH
AN 87-7 REMOTE.

HAS A RANGE OF
ABOUT HALF A
MILE.



ELIMINATE AREAS
WITHOUT
SIGNIFICANT
COVER.

HE'D NEED TREES
OR A BUILDING TO
HIDE A VAN THAT
SIZE...

THEY FAWN OVER
THAT BRAINLESS
BRUTE WHILE MY
GENIUS GOES
UNNOTICED.

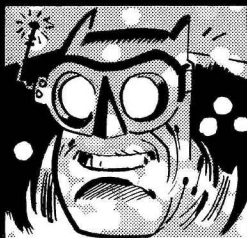
...OR A BRIDGE.

ONCE I RID THE
CITY OF THAT FALSE
IDOL, THOSE HEATHENS
WILL REALIZE IT WAS
HUGO STRANGE THAT
DELIVERED THEM.

THEN IT IS I
THEY WILL
WORSHIP!

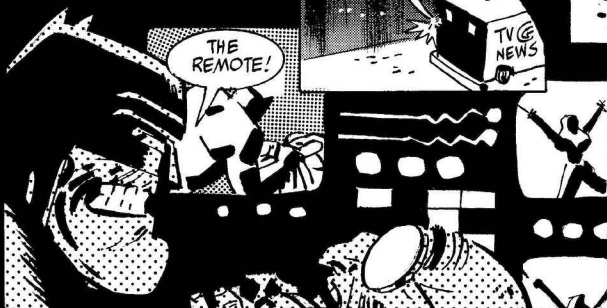


GAAAAHHH!



THE
REMOTE!

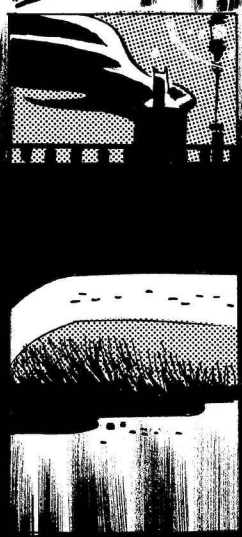
TV &
NEWS







KA-BOOM!

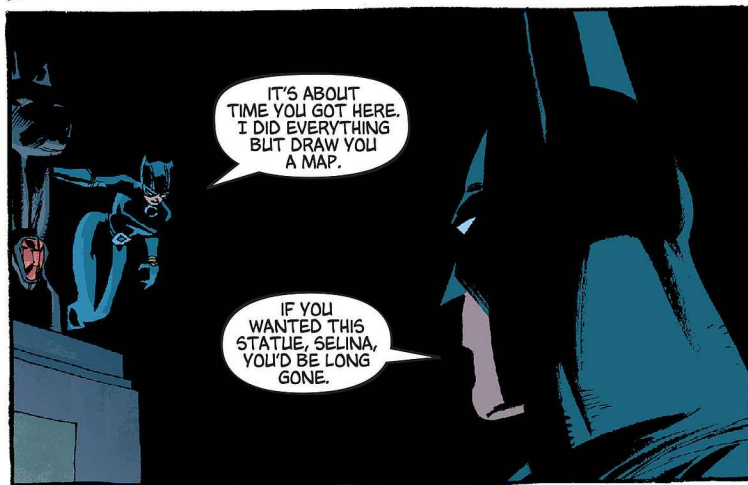
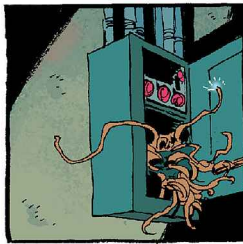


THE END

THE *Solo* DREAMGIRL



"The party was a snore, but the hostess had a helluva wardrobe."



IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU GOT HERE. I DID EVERYTHING BUT DRAW YOU A MAP.

IF YOU WANTED THIS STATUE, SELINA, YOU'D BE LONG GONE.



I DON'T WANT ANY SILLY STATUE, LOVER...



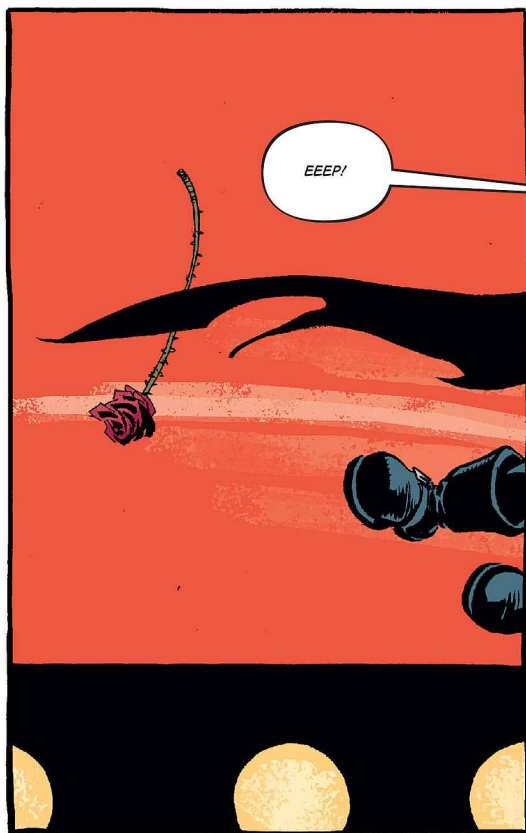
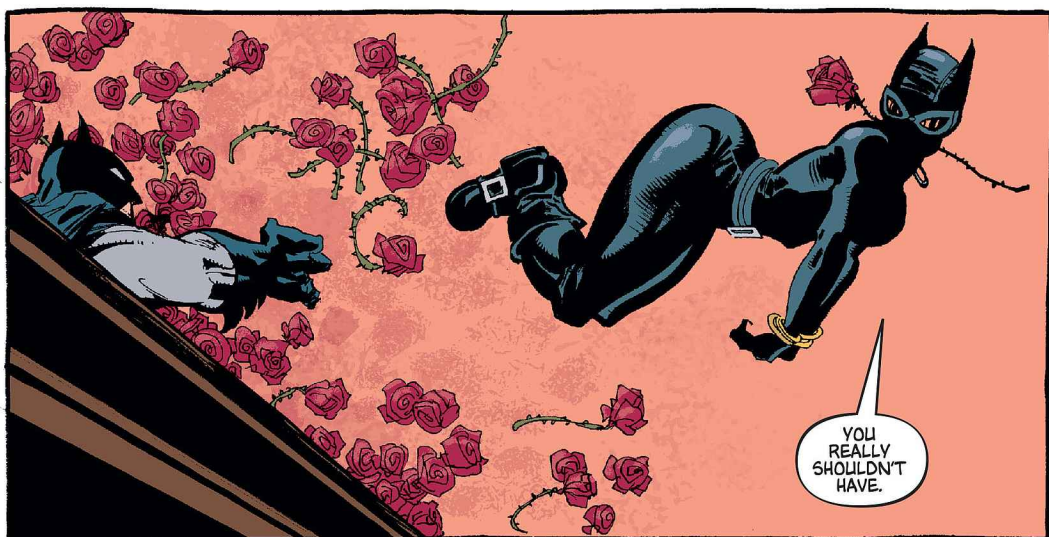
date knight

DARWYN COOKE
writer

TIM SALE
artist

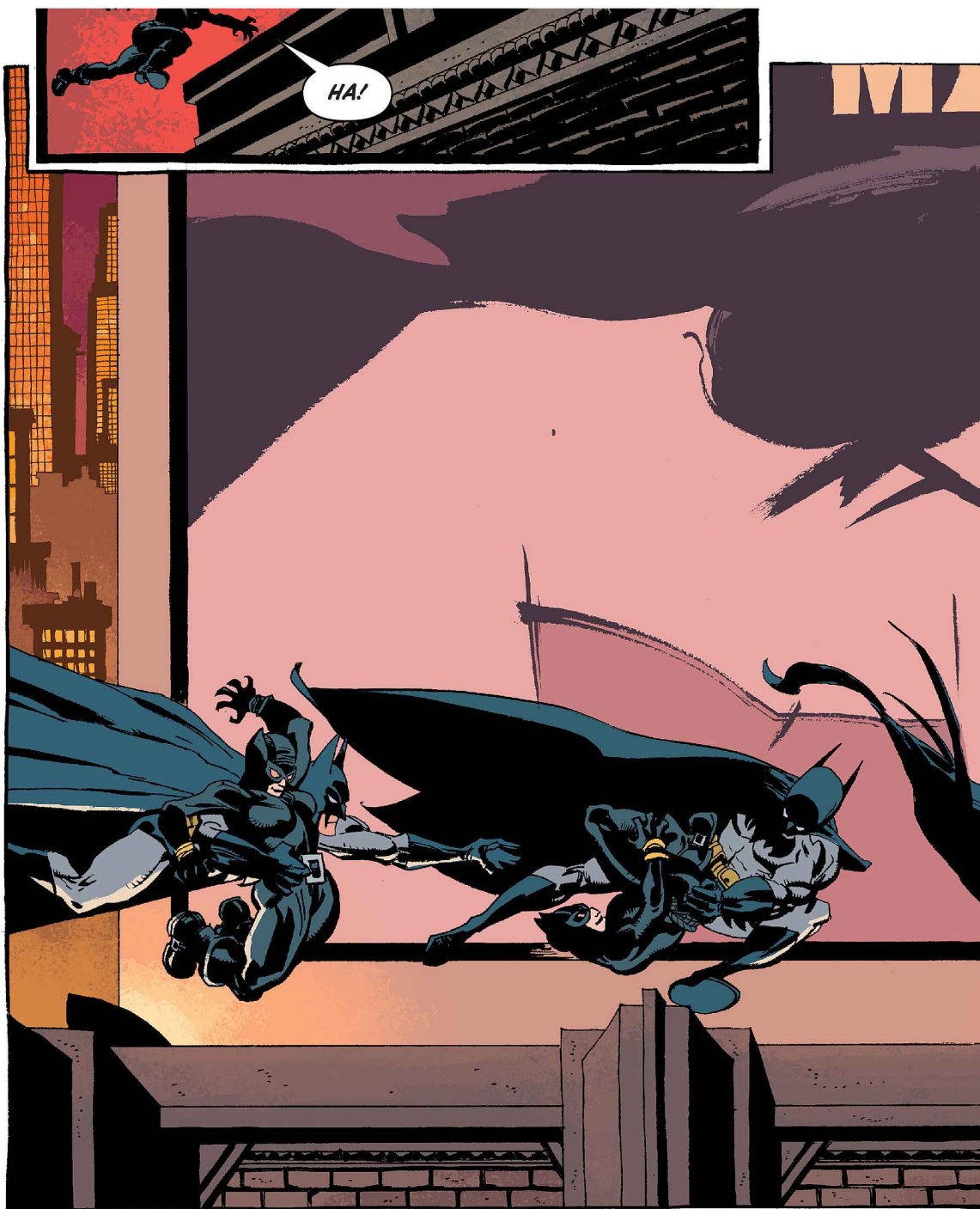










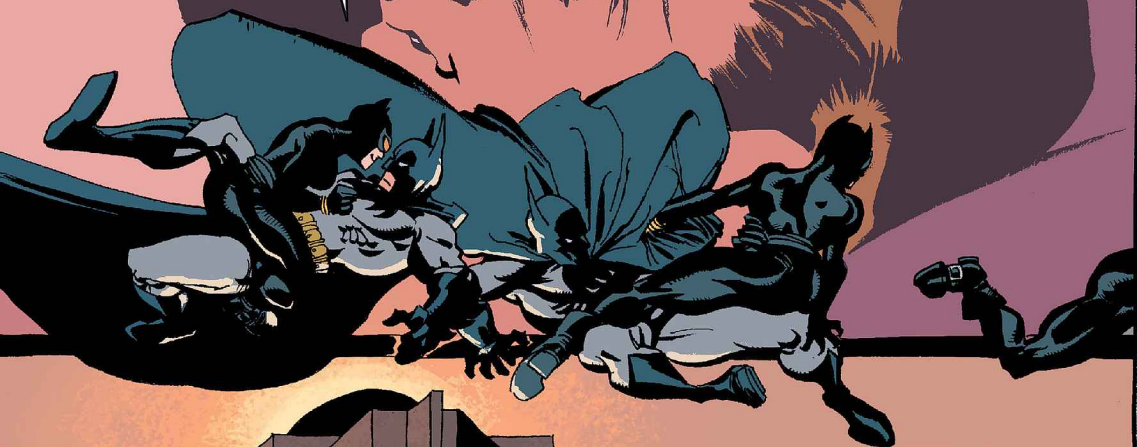


THE CHUM OF JANE

in

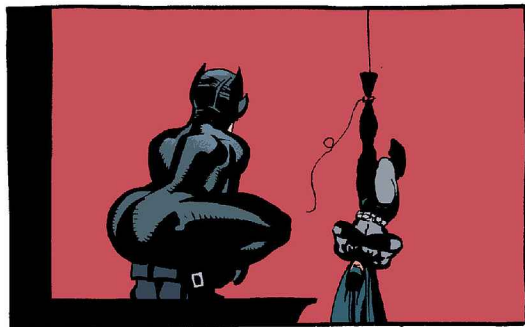
HIS KIN WO

I'LL
DANCE WITH YOU,
BIG STUFF--

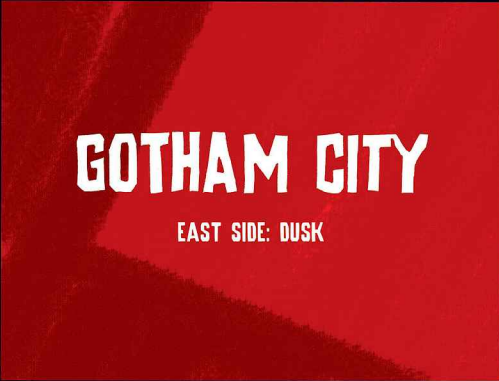


BUT I LEAD,
N'EST-CE PAS?



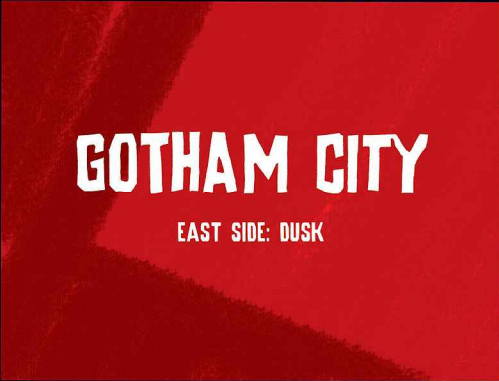






GOTHAM CITY

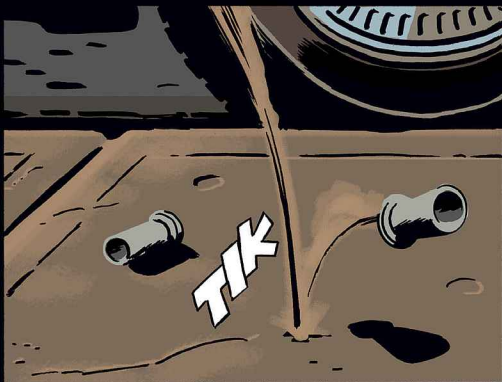
EAST SIDE: DUSK



GOTHAM CITY

EAST SIDE: DUSK







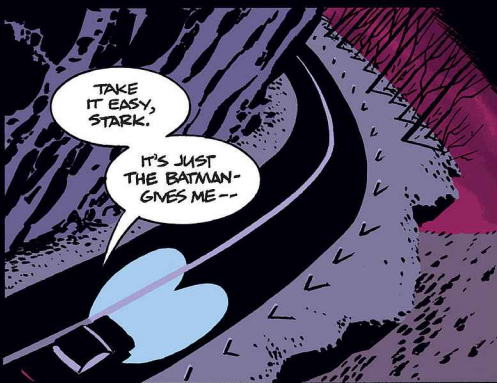
deja Vu

BY DARWYN COOKE

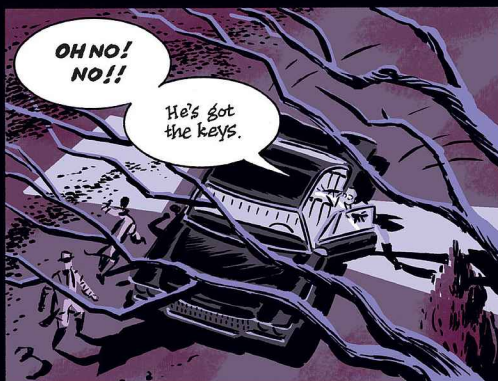
BASED ON THE SEVENTIES CLASSIC "NIGHT OF THE STALKER",
BY STEVE ENGLEHART, VIN & SAL AMENDOLA & DICK GIORDANO

Special thanks to Bruce Timm

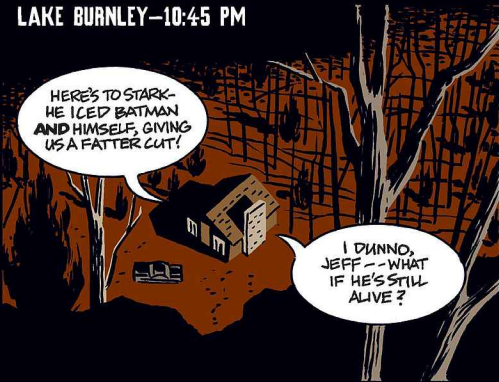





















END

BATMAN SPIRIT





BATMAN SPIRIT

CRIME
CONVENTION

STORYTELLERS

Jeph Loeb and Darwyn Cooke

INKS BY

J. Bone

COLORS BY

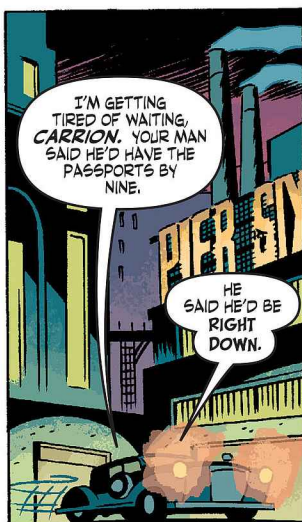
Dave Stewart

LETTERS BY

Comicraft

SPECIAL THANKS TO
DENIS KITCHEN







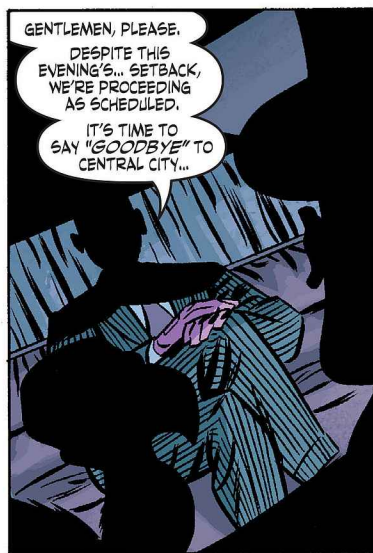


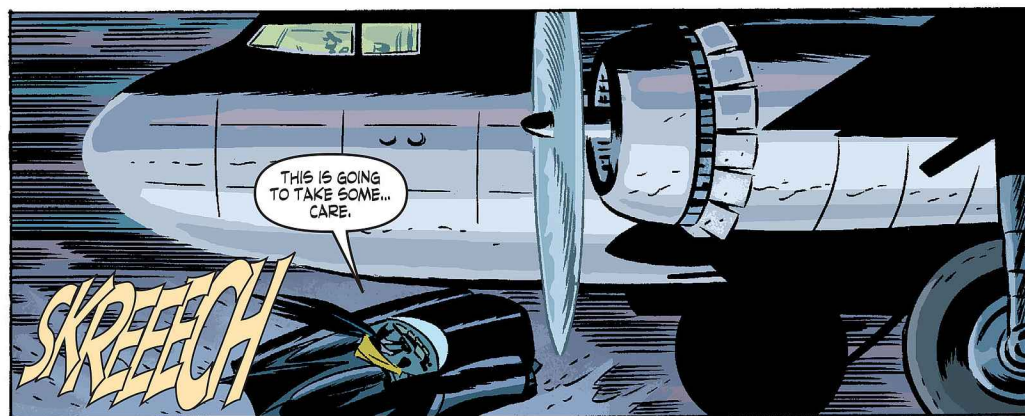
I'M GOING
TO GET AN EARFUL
ABOUT THIS FROM
DOLAN IN THE
MORNING!

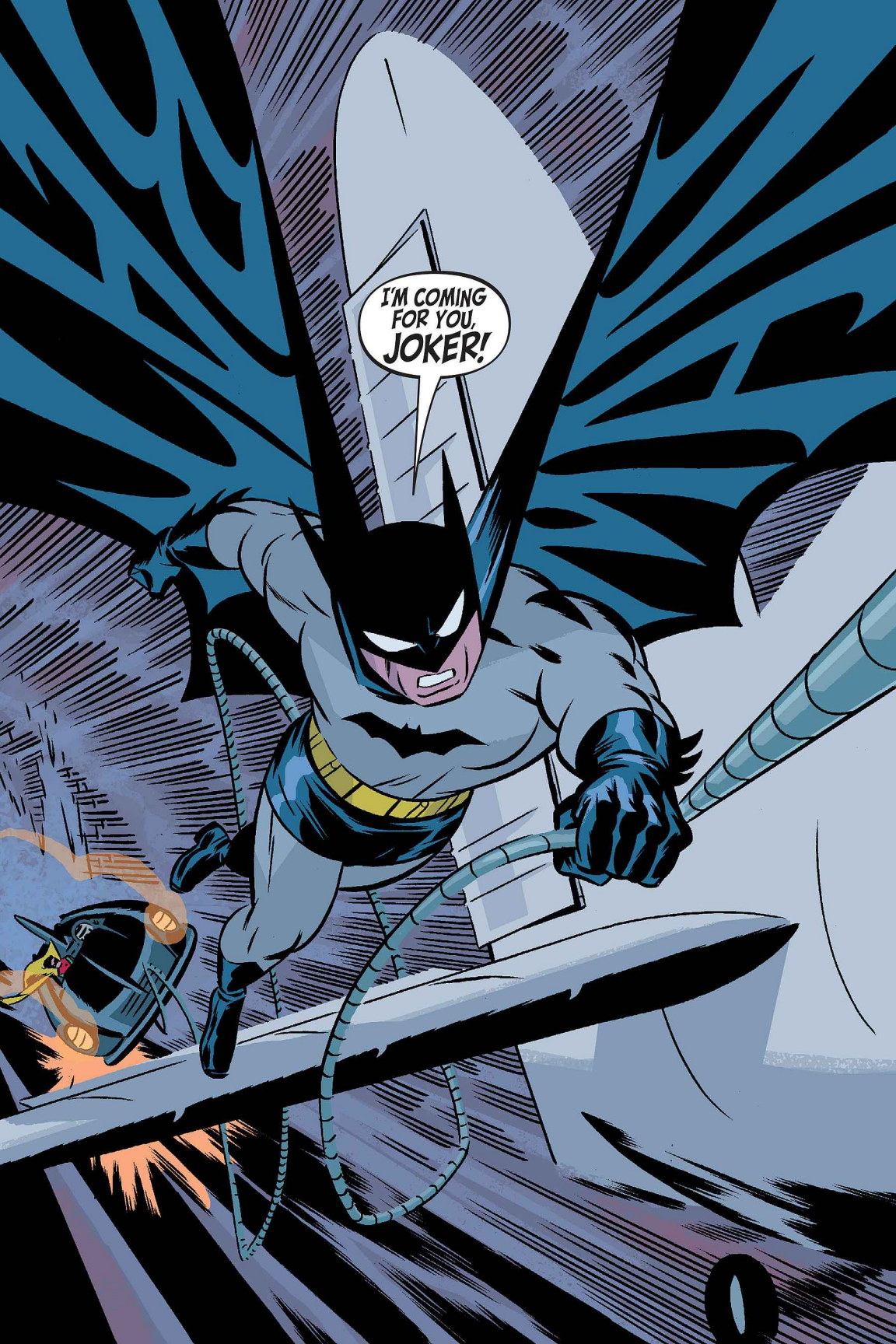


ARE YOU ALWAYS
GOING TO REFER TO YOURSELF
IN THE THIRD PERSON, COSSACK?
IT'S... **ANNOYING.**

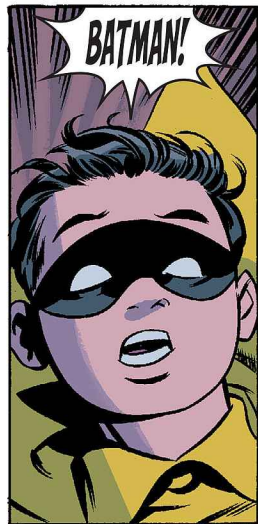
BESIDES, I
WASN'T SPEAKING
TO YOU. ISN'T THAT
RIGHT, *JULIA*,
MY LOVE?

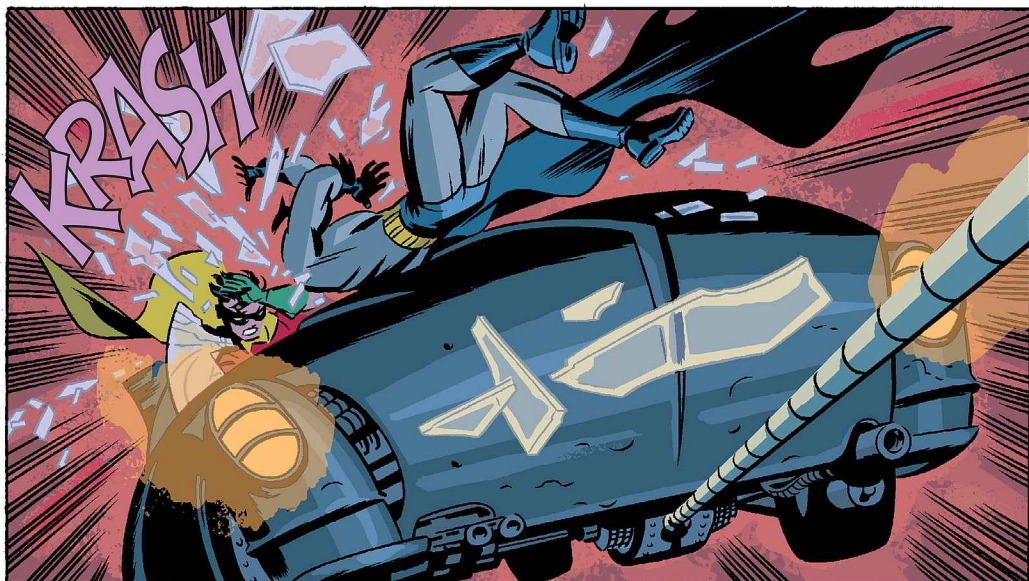


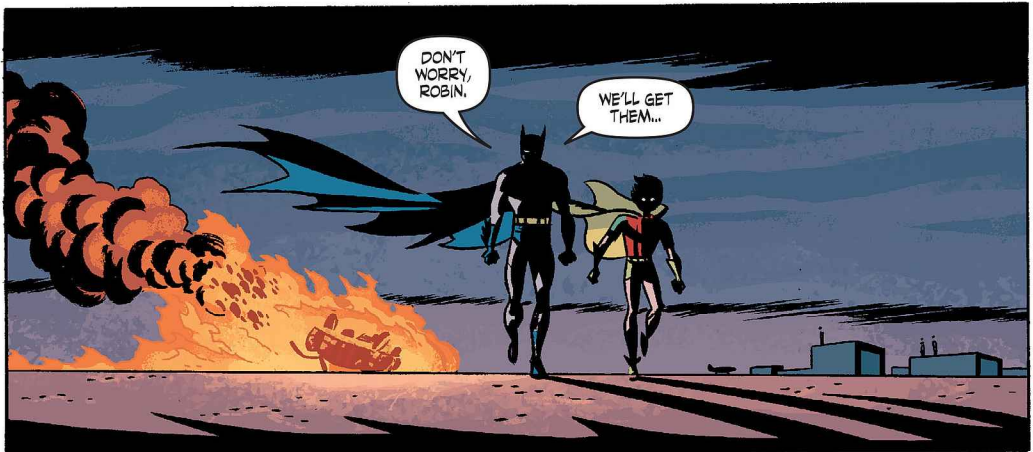


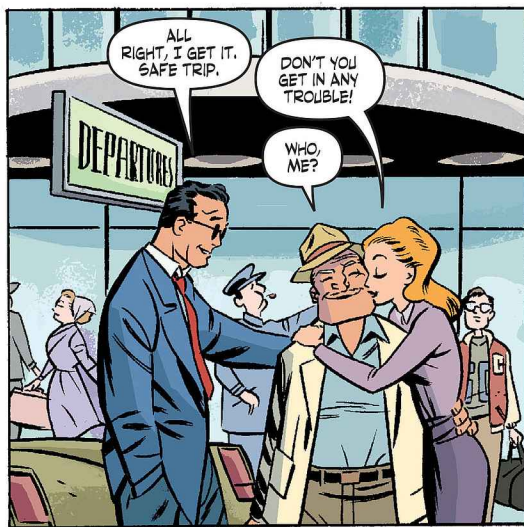
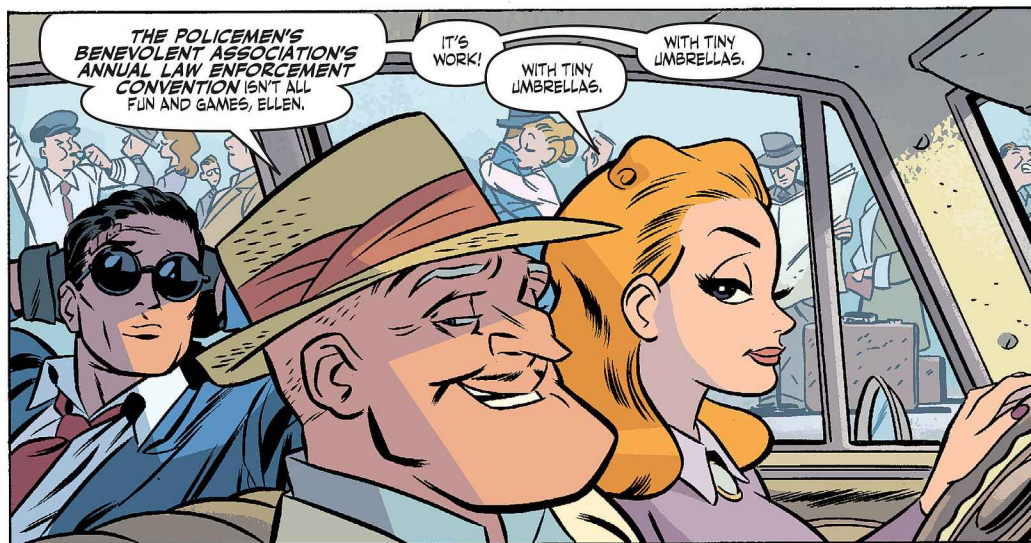
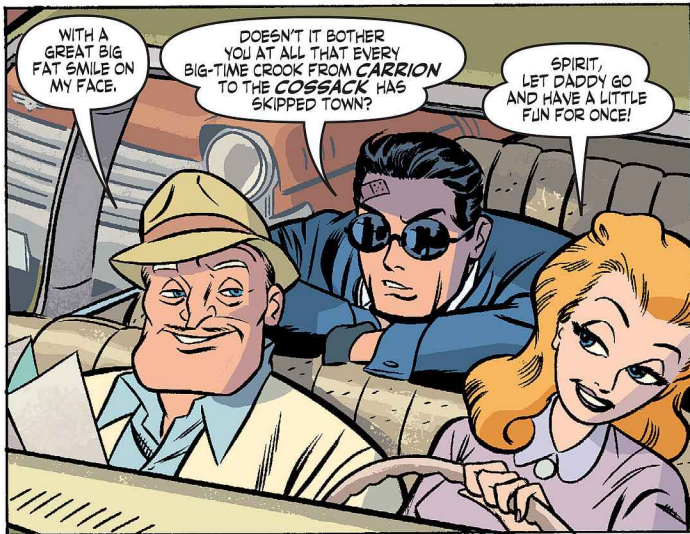
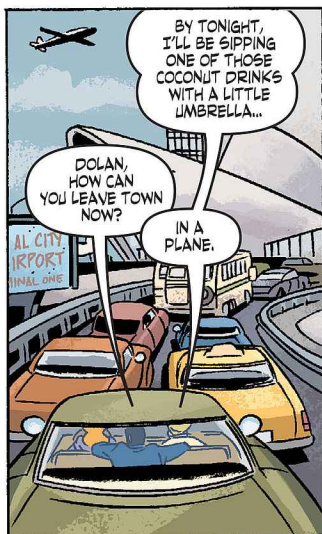


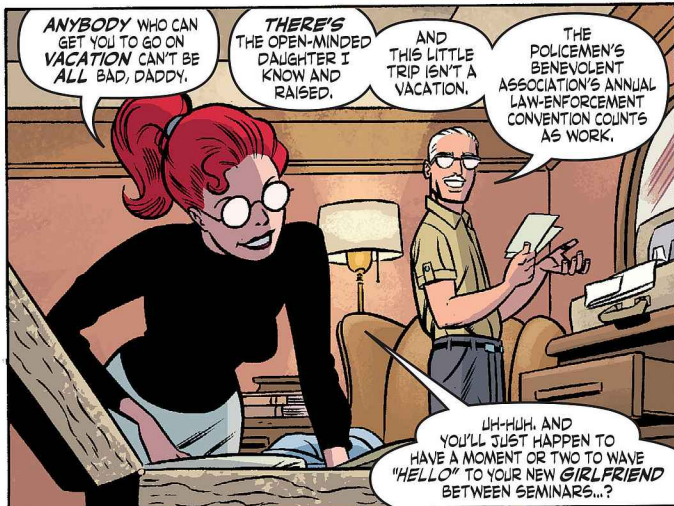
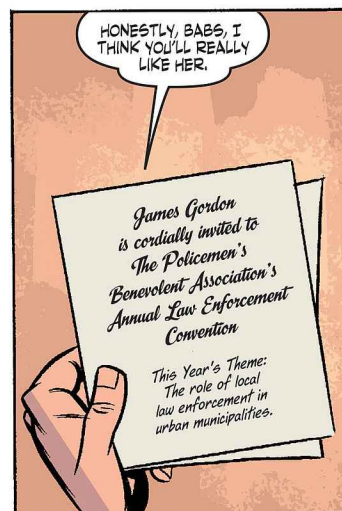
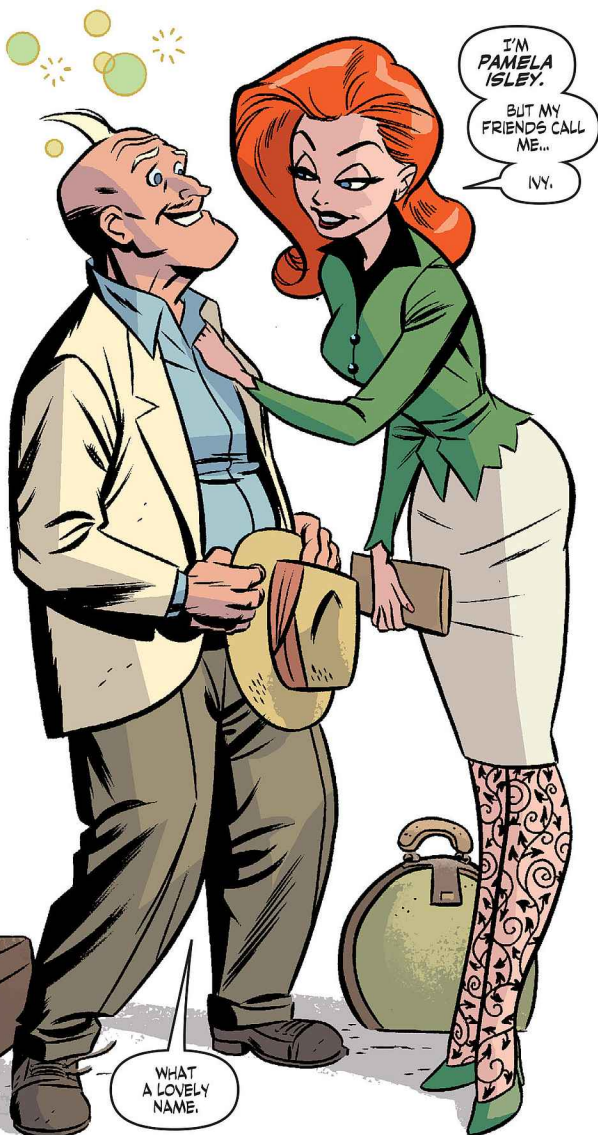
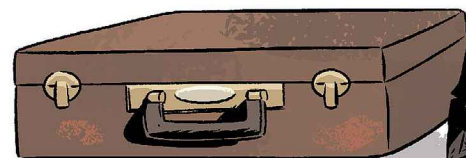
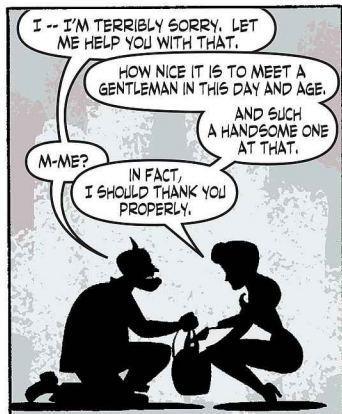
I'M COMING
FOR YOU,
JOKER!

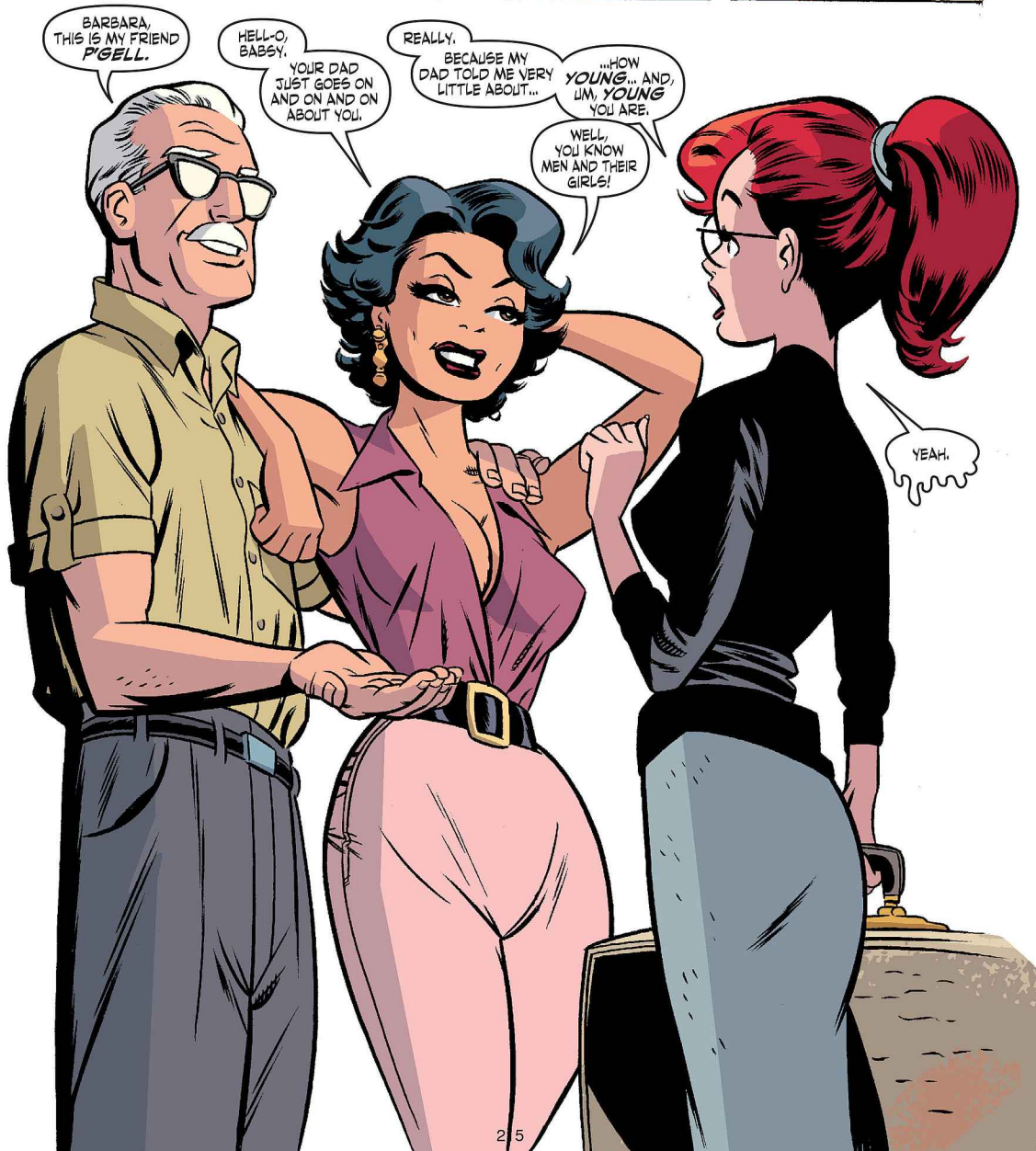


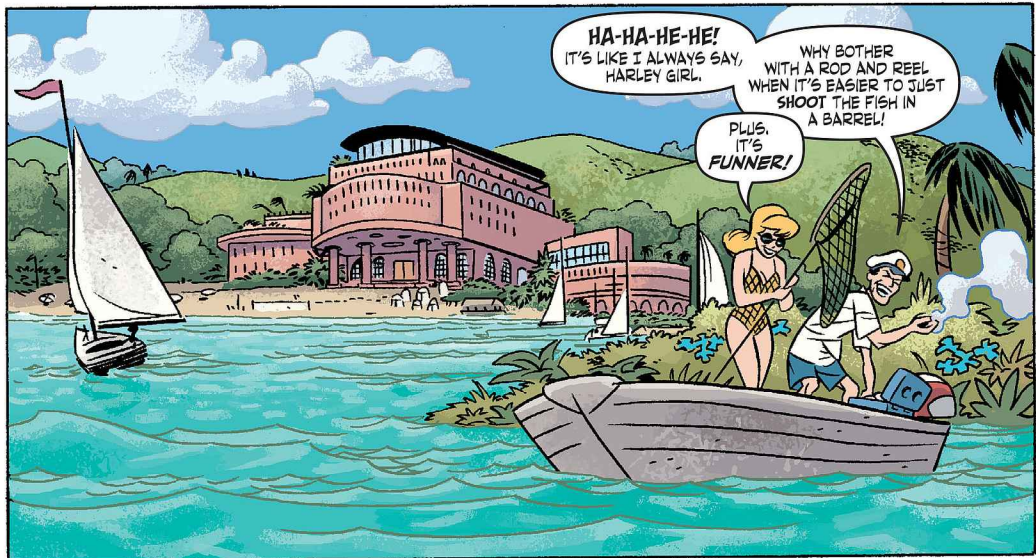
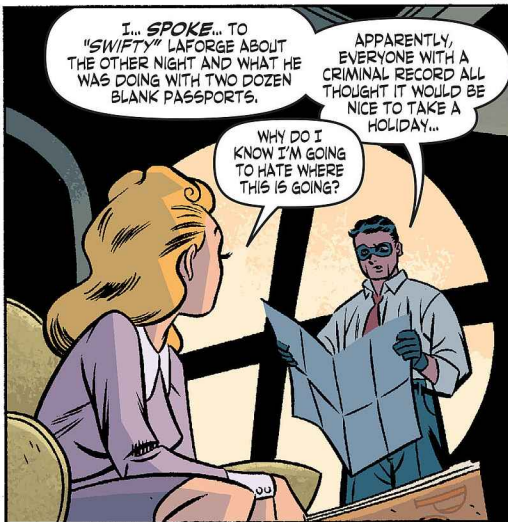
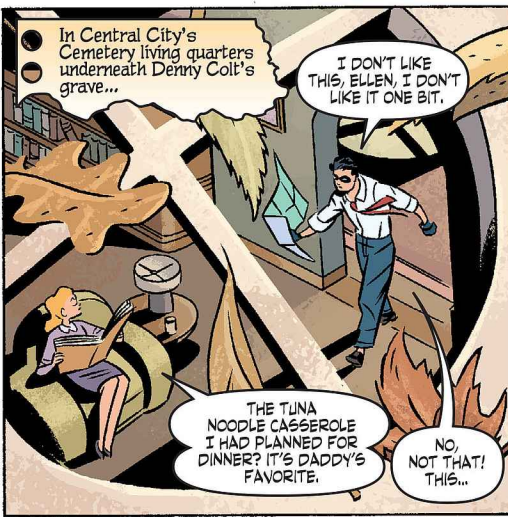


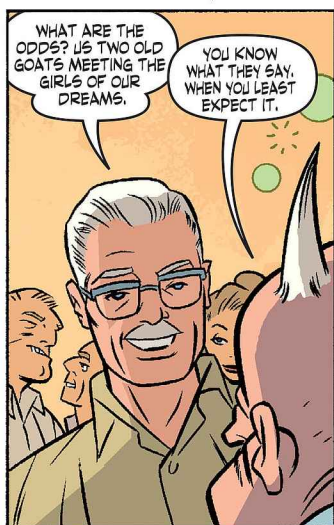
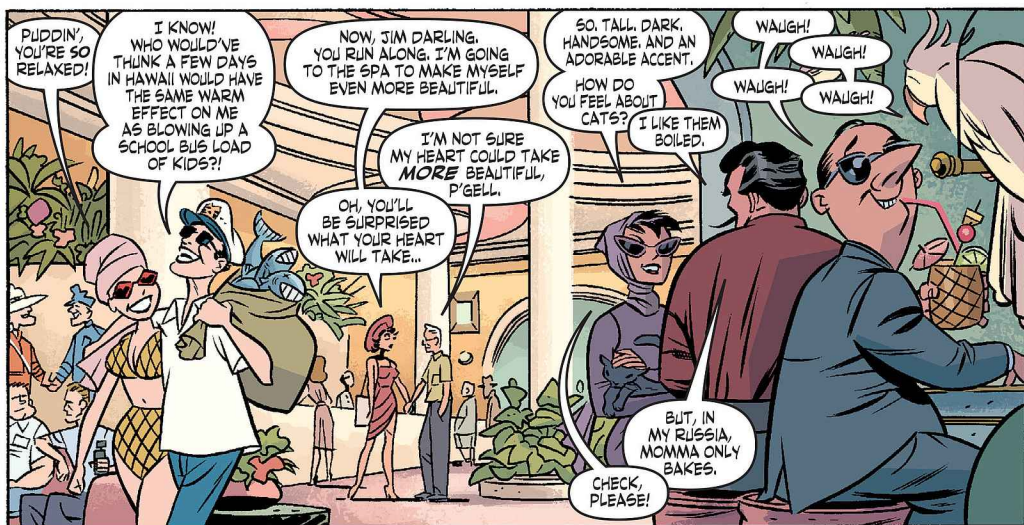


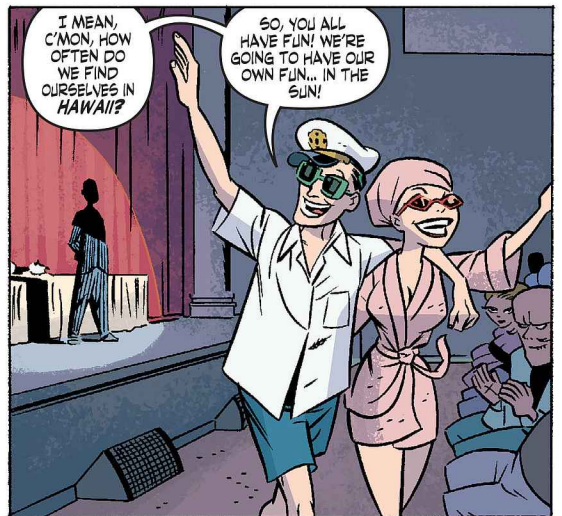
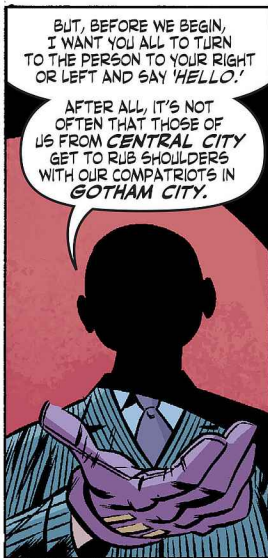


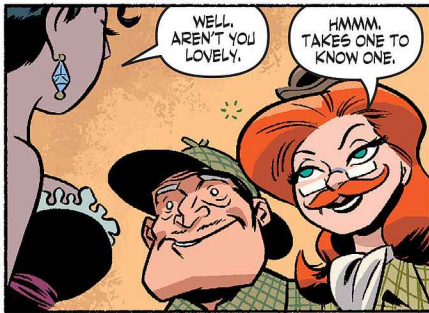






















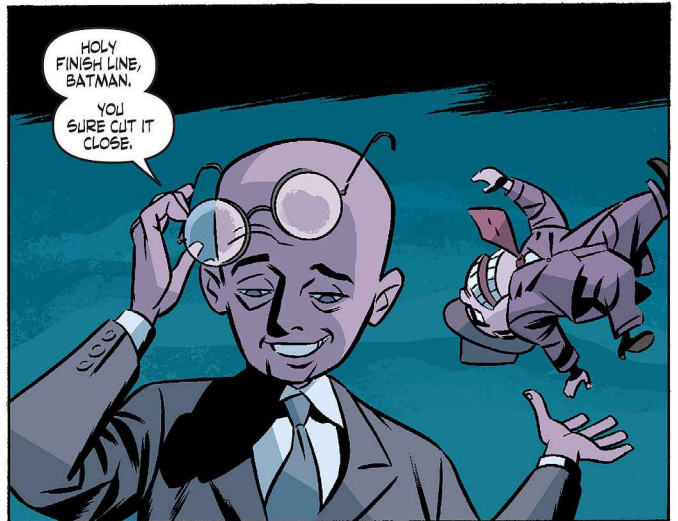




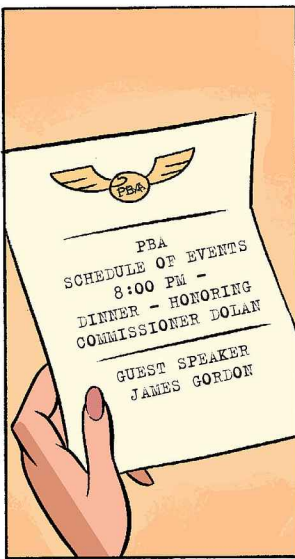
MOVE.

YOU SURE
LIKE TELLING
OTHER PEOPLE
WHAT TO
DO!



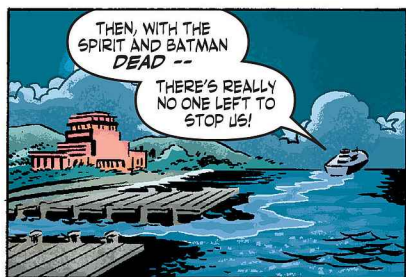
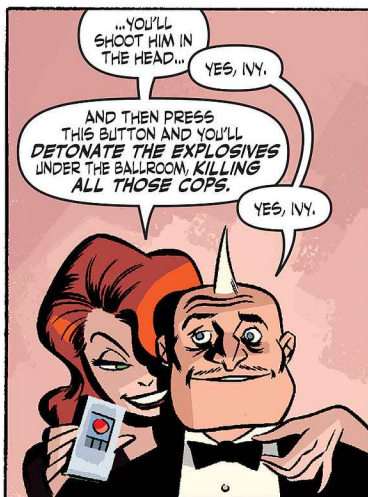


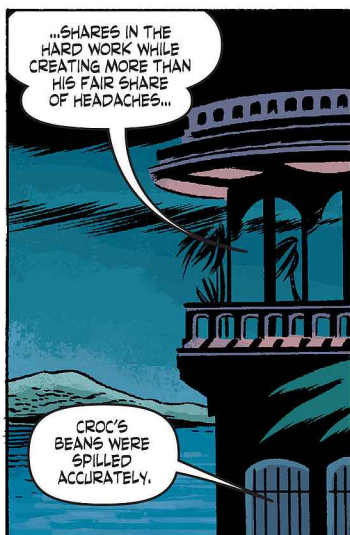
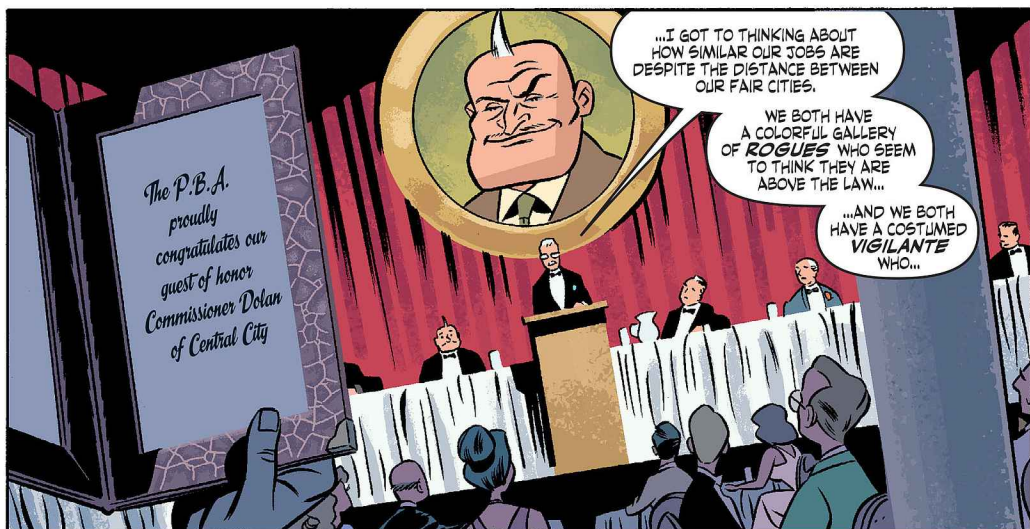


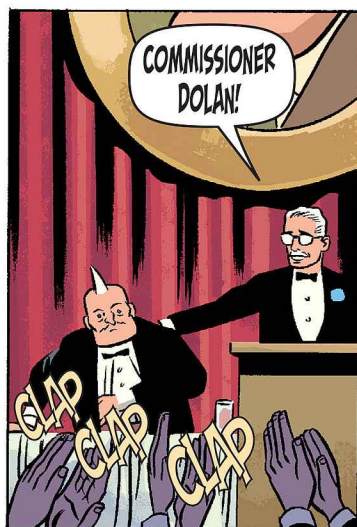


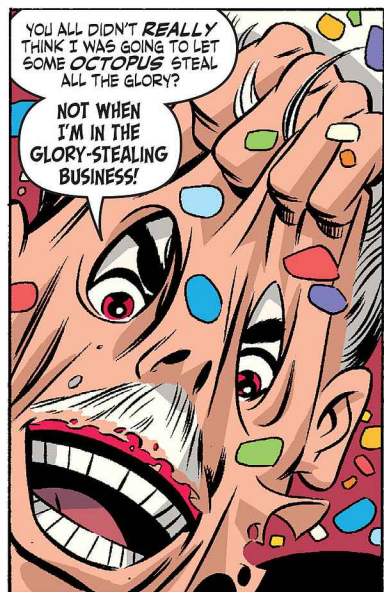
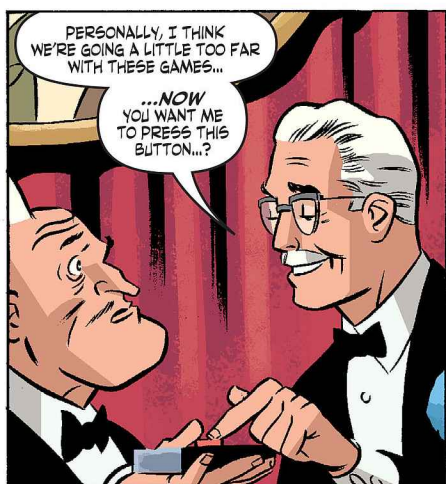


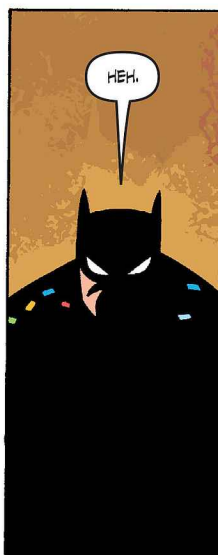
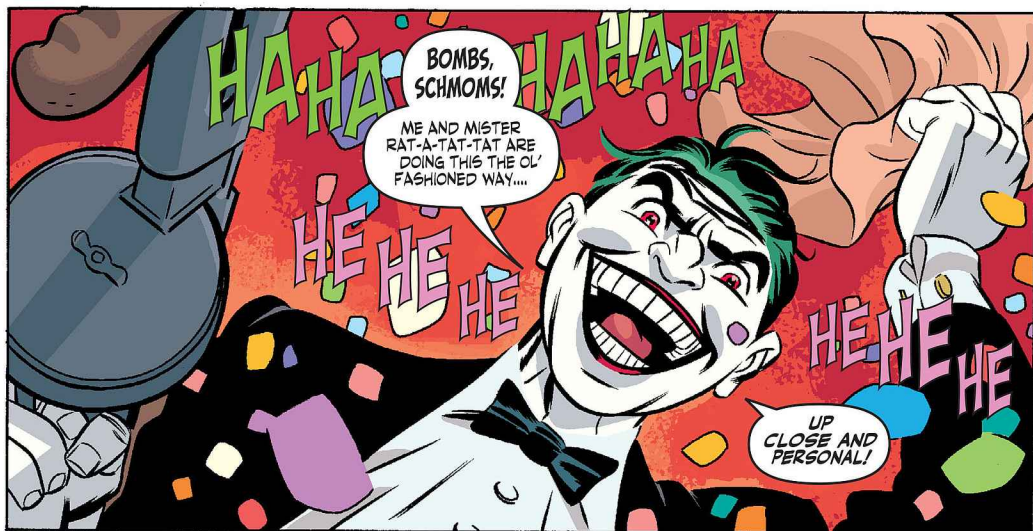






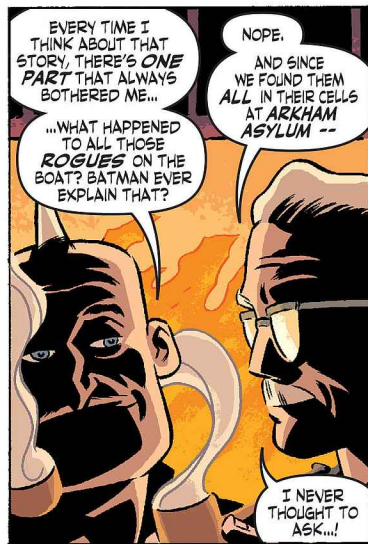
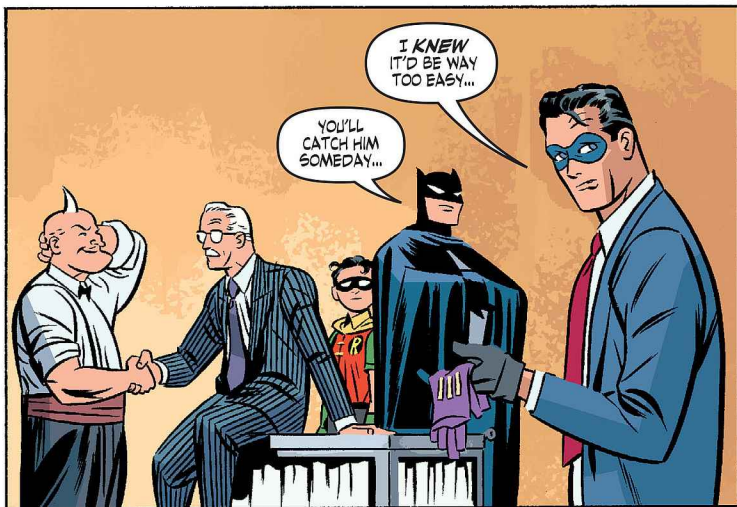


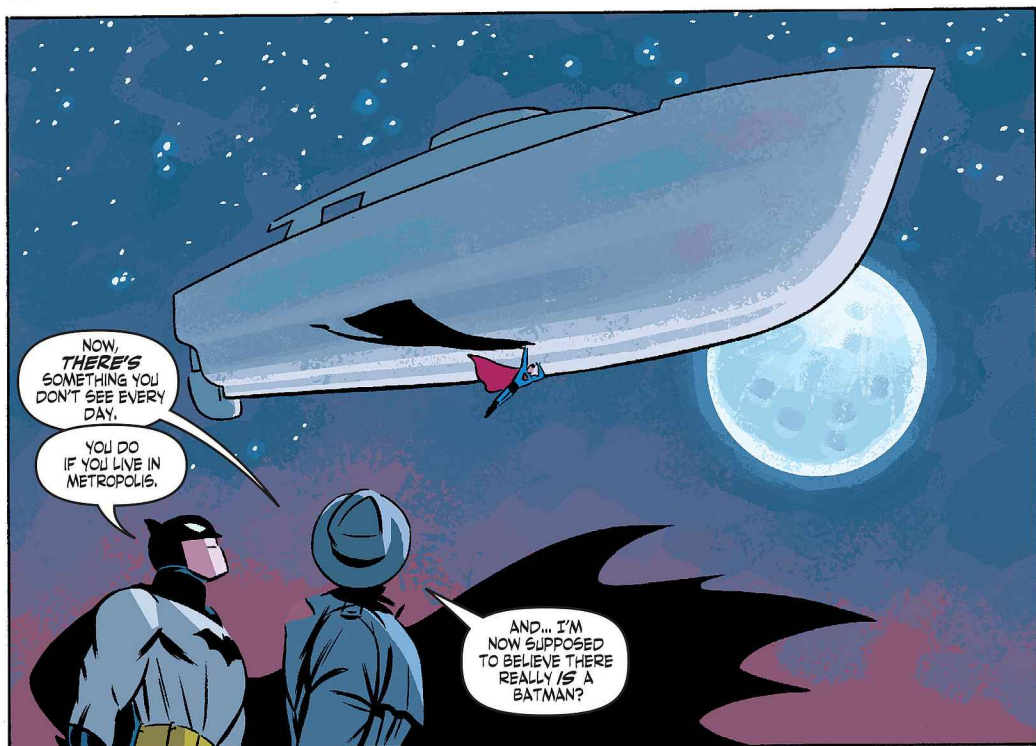
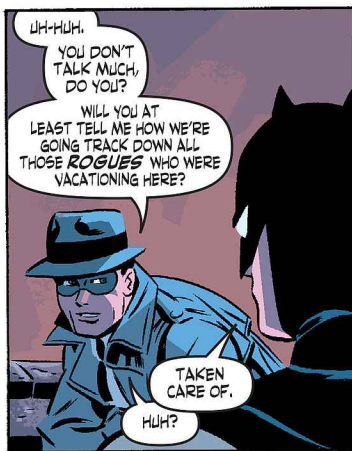












YEAH.
RIGHT.

CRIME CONVENTION

JEPH LOEB & DARWYN COOKE storytellers

J. BONE
inks

COMICRAFT
letters

DAVE STEWART
colors

MARK CHIARELLO
editor

TOM PALMER, JR.
assoc. editor

The BATMAN
created by

BOB
KANE

The SPIRIT
created by

Will
EISNER

Special thanks to
DENIS KITCHEN

The
END

K!LIN' TIME



AMANDA CONNER &
JIMMY PALMIOTTI WRITERS
DARWYN COOKE ARTIST

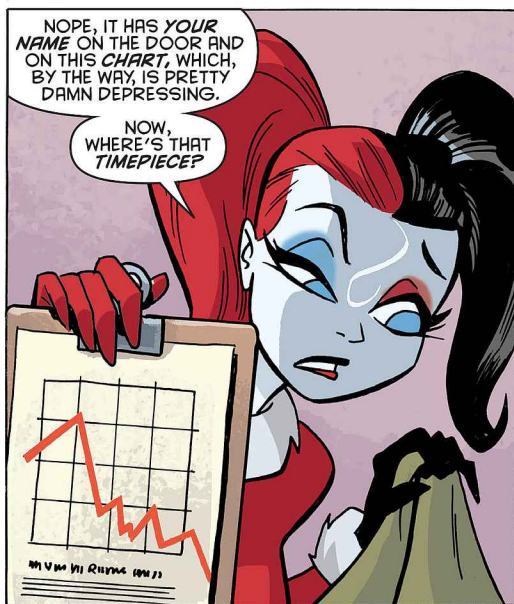
DAVE STEWART COLORS JOHN J. HILL LETTERS
DAVE WIELGOSZ ASST. EDITOR CHRIS CONROY EDITOR
HARLEY QUINN CREATED BY PAUL DINI & BRUCE TIMM

MARK DOYLE GROUP EDITOR



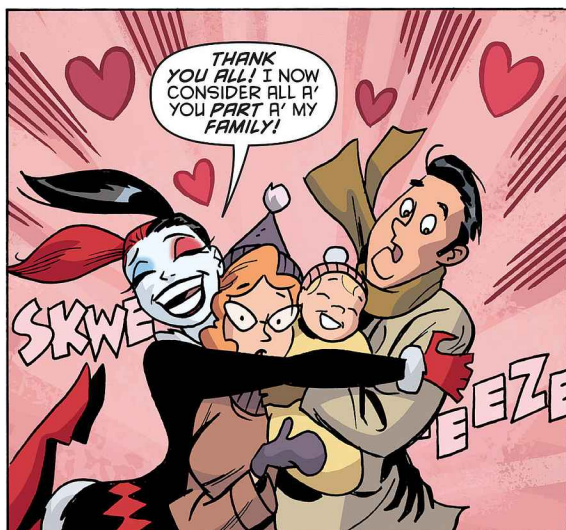






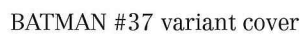










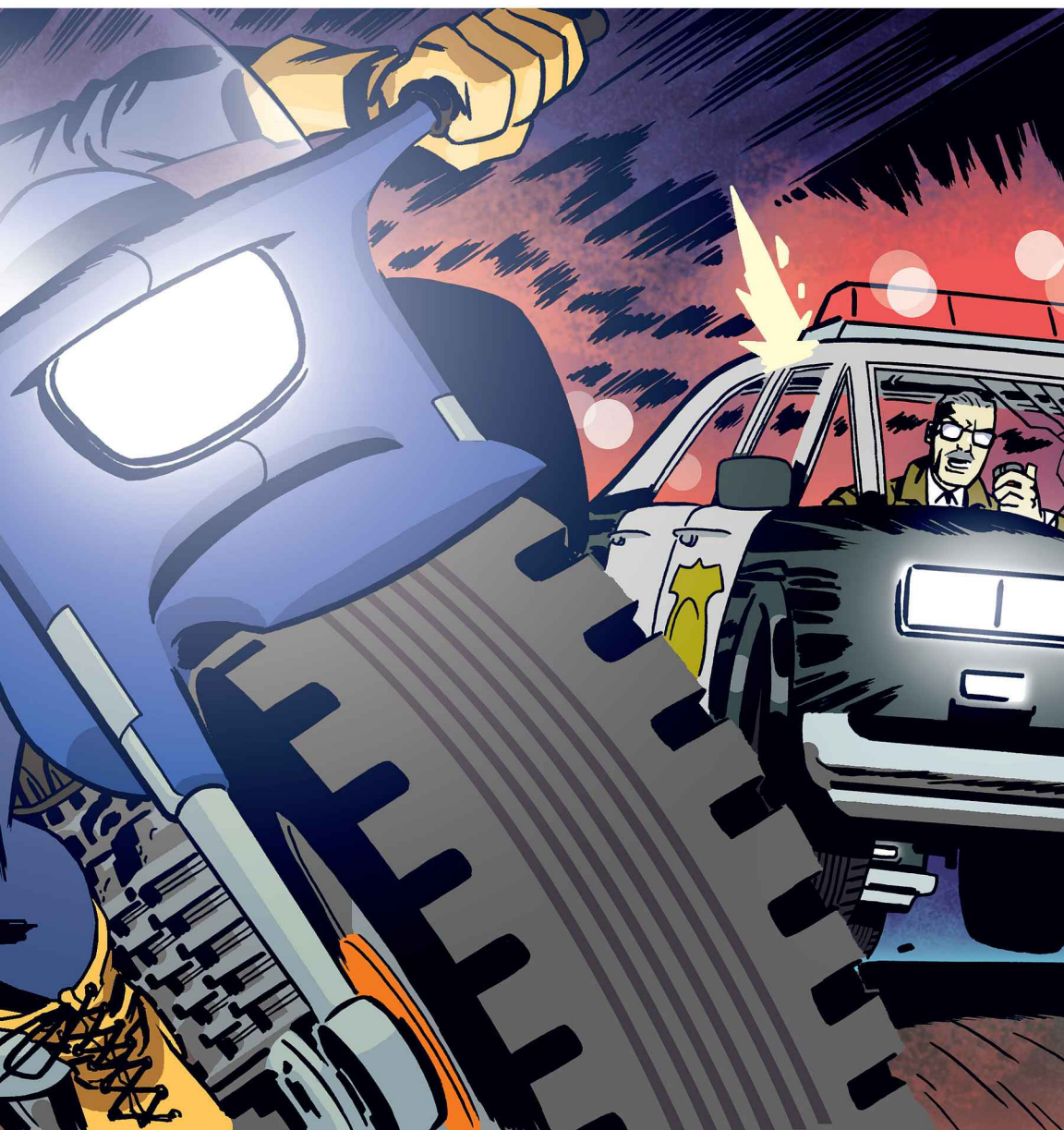






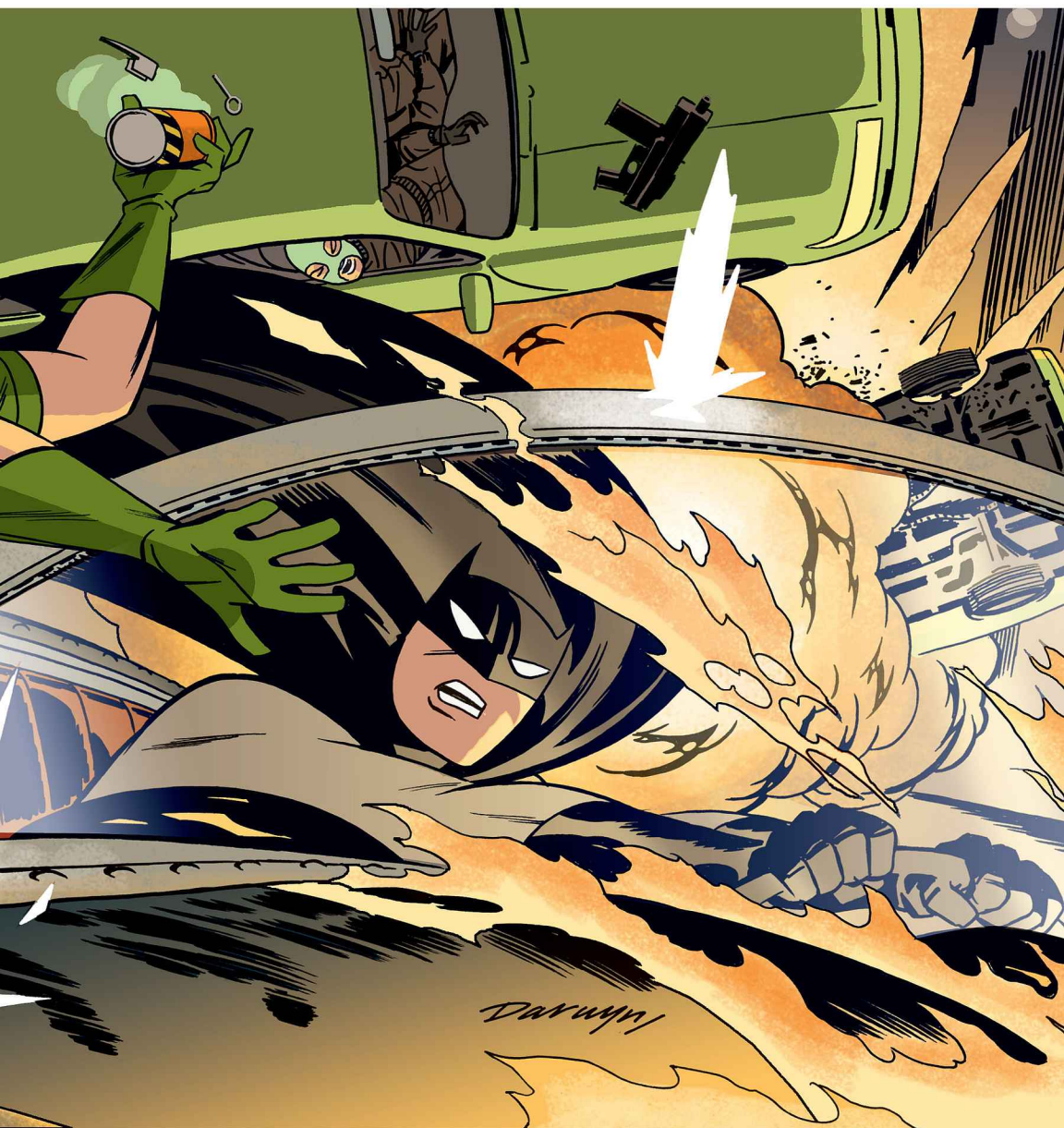
DETECTIVE COMICS #37 variant cover





BATGIRL #37 variant cover





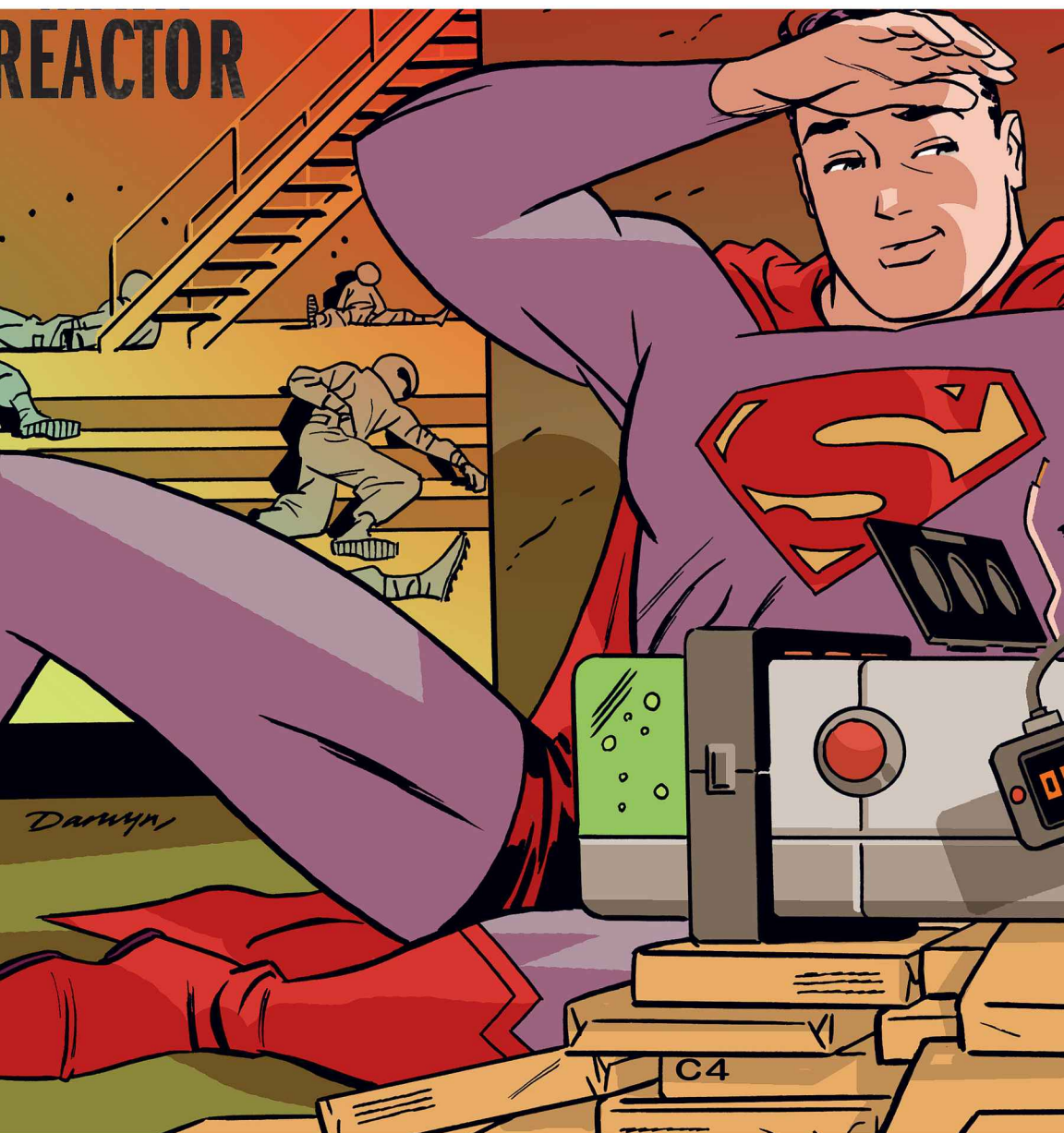
BATMAN AND ROBIN #37 variant cover

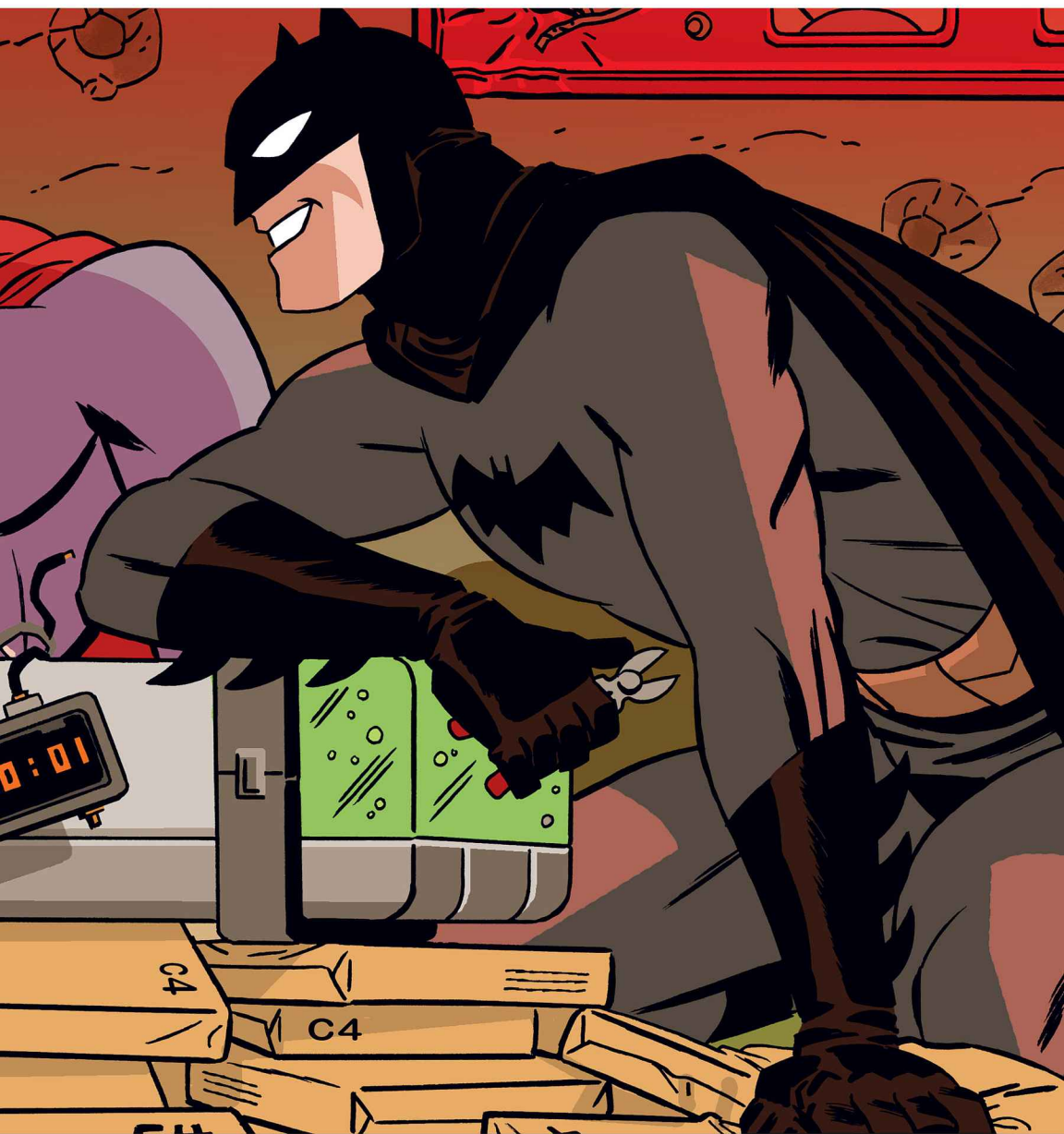




CATWOMAN #37 variant cover

REACTOR



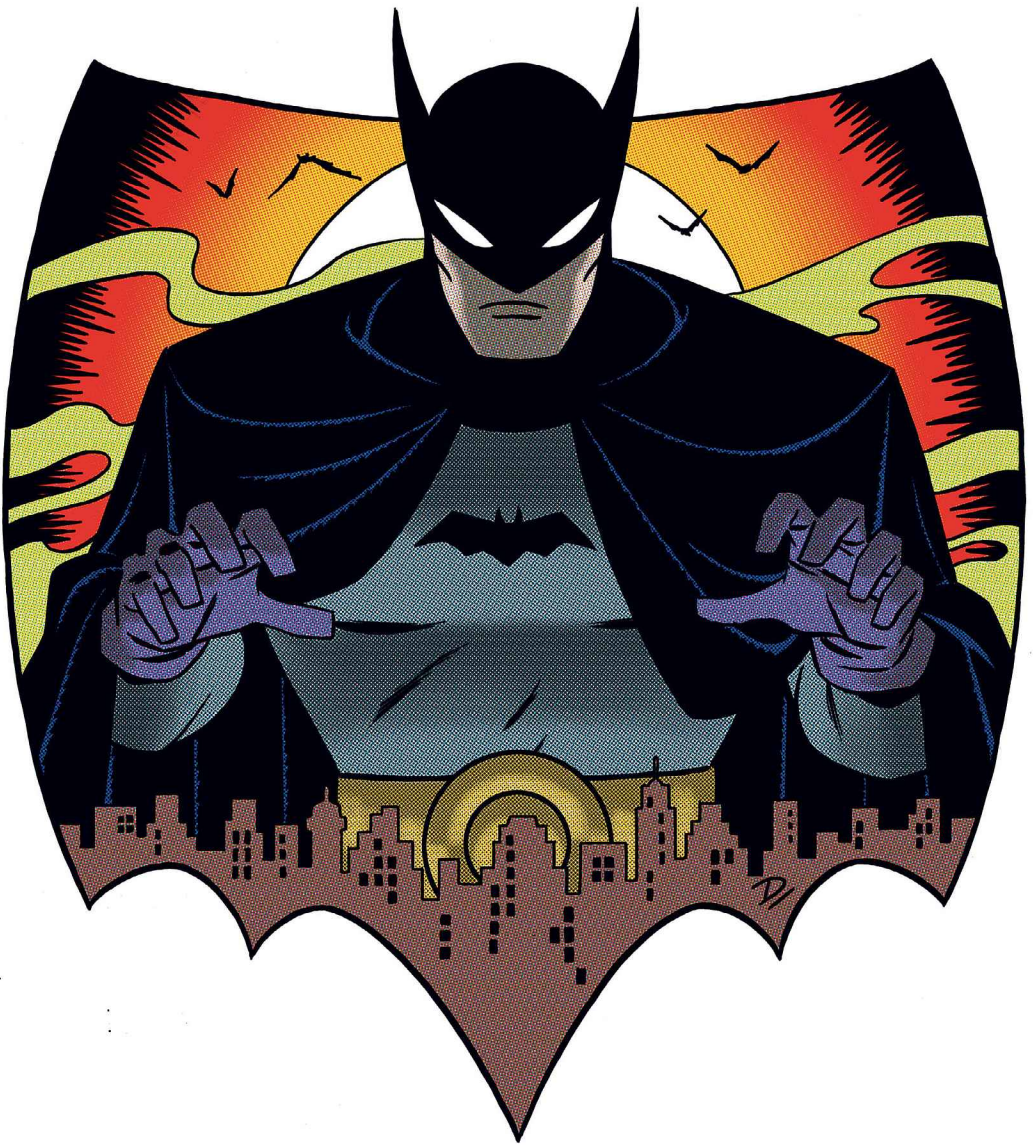


BATMAN/SUPERMAN #17 variant cover

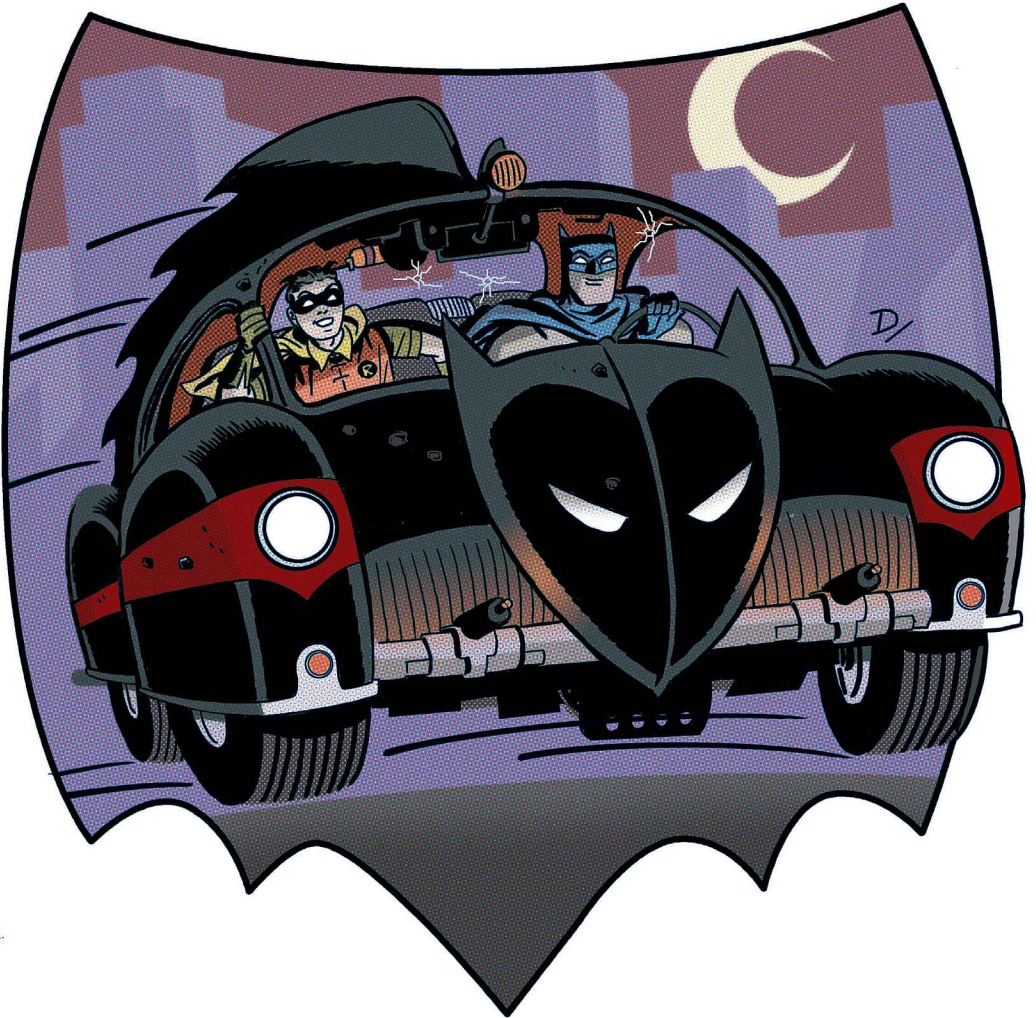




HARLEY QUINN #13 variant cover



BATMAN: THE GOLDEN AGE OMNIBUS VOL. 1 cover



afterword

by Darwyn Cooke

Concurrent to typing this, I'm putting the finishing touches on the cover painting for this volume. It occurs to me that this year is the 40th anniversary of my first encountering Batman. From Adam West through to BATMAN: YEAR ONE, he has always been my favorite fictional character.

As I entered adolescence and began to consider art as a career, I rediscovered the wonder of comics. A *Spider-Man* special by Stan Lee and John Romita, picked up during a trip to my cousin's, reignited my interest in comics. My second outing to a store for another comic brought me to Batman, my old buddy from my childhood. As fate would have it, the Batman comic on the news rack that month was DETECTIVE COMICS #439. I bought it, expecting to reacquaint myself with my childhood buddies, the dynamic duo.

What I got instead was a story that changed my youthful perception of Batman (and comics) forever. DETECTIVE #439 contains a story called "Night of the Stalker," by Steve Englehart and Sal Amendola. To this day, I consider it my all-time favorite Batman story. Here was Batman without the puns I'd grown up on, exacting revenge on criminal low-lives for an ironic tragedy. The real kicker to the story was that Batman didn't say a word. It is a perfect example of the character distilled to his purest form. A week later, my trip to the news rack yielded Len Wein and Neal Adams' "Moon of the Wolf." I was hooked. For life.

The intervening years saw my life take a multitude of interesting career turns, but in the back of my mind, there was always comics—and Batman. He is a character so primal and universally understood that talented creators have been able to find

a way to keep him interesting for over 65 years. Thanks to the leap of faith that men like Bruce Timm and Mark Chiarello made when they saw my work, I was able to finally take my shot at the Dark Knight Detective. Below are some thoughts on the work collected in this volume, which constitutes pretty much all the Batman-related work I've done in comics. It is of interest to note that all the books listed below were originally edited by Mark Chiarello. When you get outside of continuity and look at the long term, Mark is one of the guiding forces keeping Batman's status iconic and compelling for another generation. My heartfelt thanks go to him for letting me sing these little songs.

BATMAN: EGO

This was my first project for DC. I had spent a few years considering a career in comics,





and had developed several ideas for a pitch. This was to be my first real published story, and as such, I put considerable pressure on myself to come up with something unique. I knew I wanted to do Batman, and I knew I wanted to tell a story that would encompass the entire mythos.

Talk about setting yourself up to fail. A very simple and absurd idea emerged from all the head scratching. What if Bruce Wayne and Batman were able to sit down and talk about what it is they do? Are they the same person? Completely different personas? Two sides of the same coin? This kinda dumb premise got me excited. It would allow me to have them discuss all the important moments in their life from different angles.

In order to avoid any literal separation of their physical selves, I staged the story in the aftermath of a severe psychological trauma. Our set is the landscape of Bruce's tormented mind, allowing us to move visually from place to place without transition. Upon review, I consider EGO an earnest yet flawed first effort.



"HERE BE MONSTERS"
FROM GOTHAM KNIGHTS No.23
(with writer Paul Grist)

My first foray into Mark Chiarello's distinguished BATMAN: BLACK AND WHITE series. I recall being delighted by Paul's script and having a lot of fun with the Madame X design. This story was finished using an HB pencil, black Prismacolor pencil and chunky inks where we had solid blacks.

"THE MONUMENT"
FROM GOTHAM KNIGHTS No.33
(with artist Bill Wray)

My second BATMAN: BLACK AND WHITE, this time as the typist. Originally intended for Art Adams, scheduling woes led to Mark suggesting Bill Wray. As a lifelong fan of Bill's work, I thought it was an inspired choice. His Batman is a fantastic synthesis of Frank Miller's Dark Knight and Wally Wood's "Superduperman." Bill took a very tepid script of mine and turned it into a hilarious and full-blown send-up.

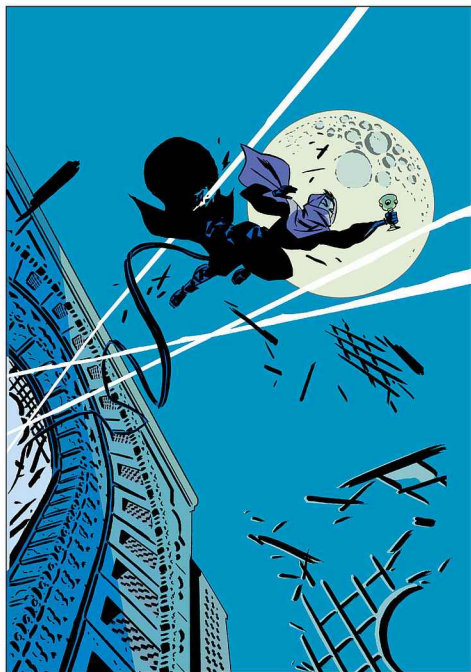


CATWOMAN: SELINA'S BIG SCORE

During my run on CATWOMAN with Ed Brubaker and Doc Allred, I saw the chance to do a story that filled a few gaps in Selina's life and perhaps provide her with the motivation for the altruistic deeds Ed and I had her displaying in the monthly. That being said, Selina was simply a great character that would be a natural for a heist story. I teamed Selina up with Jeff and Stark, the two bad boys I had used in the then-unpublished "Déjà Vu" (confusing, I know—see below).

Jeff is my Chow Yun-Fat—a favorite of mine from the Hong Kong crime movie scene. Stark is my Lee Marvin, and is named after the crime novelist Richard Stark. Stark (a pseudonym for Donald Westlake) is famous for his series of Parker crime novels. The 1966 film classic *Point Blank* is an adaptation of Parker's first appearance and stars Lee Marvin in a quintessential performance.

The other cornerstone of BIG SCORE was Siegel and Shuster's Slam Bradley, a character I had become quite fond of since Ed's and my decision to weave him into Selina's world. The monthly was emphasizing Slam as a foil to Selina, and as such his drinking and need were the sides we were seeing. I wanted to show the other side of the man—

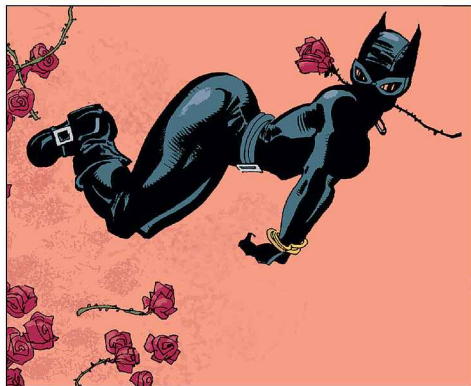


the streetwise detective, the romantic adventurer and, primarily, the slightly crazy Irishman who acts with great justice and violence when faced with evil bastards.

I threw in Burgess Meredith (Swiftly) and Pam Grier (Crystal), and I had a cast to kill for. BIG SCORE remains my favorite book that I've written and drawn.

"DATE NIGHT" FROM SOLO No. 1 (with artist Tim Sale)

This story was originally intended to run in the back of the Selina hardcover, but was cut as we pulled the book together. Tim Sale had asked if I could work with him on a Catwoman story for his issue of SOLO. I had loved this script and was sad to see it go from the hardcover. Its romantic theme lent itself to Tim's strengths, so we did it Marvel style. I sent Tim a script in draft form, and Tim expanded the page count somewhat to





open up a few scenes. A great little story with one of the industry's most distinctive stylists.

"DÉJÀ VU" FROM SOLO No.5

This will take a bit of explaining. If you've read the first part of this introduction, you'll remember my mentioning "Night of the Stalker." In 1998, while working on *Batman: The Animated Series*, I did a version of this story in the adventures style. I remember being floored when Bruce Timm offered to write it. We finished it up and promptly sent it in to DC, who decided not to buy it from us. When it came time to do my issue of SOLO, I knew I wanted to do that story. When I pulled it out, I saw how much different it looked from my current work and decided to start from scratch. I talked to Bruce to tell him I hoped he didn't mind, but I really wanted to rewrite the story so that my issue of SOLO could be truly solo. Bruce was cool about that and I dove into the work. I did keep a couple of Bruce's lines, though, my favorite being "That Stark. What a character." The eagle-eyed out there will notice Jeff and Stark from BIG SCORE.

The real thanks go to Steve Englehart, Sal Amendola and Dick Giordano for the

original that I humbly adapted.

Other than a few covers and pinups, I suppose that is that. I hope that for a few years anyway, I'm able to get away from Batman. Not because of any change of heart regarding the character. He is simply exhausting to be with. Always grim, always working, his quest is never over. Every time he appears, it has to be magic. You have to bring your "A" game, because he always does. A new reveal. A new angle. Yet another new story. The guy wears you out.

I'm sure that one day I'll make it back to Gotham City, but right now I'd just as soon join the rest of you and sit back with a good Batman yarn. If you'll excuse me, I'm going to go dig up Goodwin and Toth's "Ghost of the Killer Skies."

Thanks for reading.

Darwyn

This text was written for and originally published in the first edition of BATMAN: EGO AND OTHER TAILS (2007).

DARWYN COOKE

was an acclaimed cartoonist, animator and writer. After spending several years as a magazine art director and graphic designer, Cooke switched careers and began working in animation, where he contributed to such shows as *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Superman: The Animated Series* and *Men In Black: The Series*. Following these successes, DC Comics approached Cooke to write and illustrate a project that he had submitted to the company years earlier: *BATMAN: EGO*. The critical success of this graphic novel led to more freelance work, including a relaunch of the *CATWOMAN* series with writer Ed Brubaker, which inspired Cooke to write and draw the graphic novel *CATWOMAN: SELINA'S BIG SCORE*, as well as assignments on *X-Force* and *Spider-Man's Tangled Web* for Marvel Comics. Cooke then spent several years writing and drawing the ambitious epic *THE NEW FRONTIER*, a six-issue miniseries bridging the gap between the end of the Golden Age of Comics and the beginning of the Silver Age. He also illustrated and wrote a highly acclaimed issue of DC's artist-centric series *SOLO* and crafted a new incarnation of *THE SPIRIT* for DC. In 2012, he was one of the essential voices behind *BEFORE WATCHMEN*, one of the most talked-about comics events of the decade. His recent projects include Richard Stark's *Parker* for IDW, *THE TWILIGHT CHILDREN* for Vertigo and a month-long variant cover event featuring DC characters in quiet moments, for which he won his thirteenth Eisner Award. After a battle with lung cancer, Cooke died in May 2016 at age 53. ★





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